THE KNOWLESLETTER

November 2026 | VOL. 34, NO. 11 | A MONTHLY REPORT FROM PEACE ON EARTH MINISTRIES: VICTOR & EVEYLN KNOWLES, FOUNDERS; LINCOLN KNOWLES, PRESIDENT.

GRATEFUL FOR GIANTS

By Lincoln Knowles

I am short. So, when people ask me how tall I am, I tell them, "I'm not." But I come from a line of giants. Let me tell you how.

When I turn the calendar at the end of a month, my mind takes inventory of that little box of time. November: All Saints' Day, Election Day, Veterans Day, and a few others, but Thanksgiving Day – that's the big one. It waits there, in capital letters, at the end of the month, saying, "Come on, man, what are you thankful for?" To which I reply, "Don't rush me; I've got all month." Throughout the year, of course, I try to count my blessings as they come. But as I look ahead to a table of plenty and a tree of presents, it's a good time to get specific about God's abundance and my gratitude, my plenty. It's good to say it aloud. Or write it.

I am profoundly thankful for my spiritual heritage and all of its inherent blessings: The Christian family God gave me to grow up in. Many brothers and sisters in Christ from numerous congregations. My home church. My small group. People who walk with me across the hills of theology. A surplus of Bibles. Scriptural understanding, albeit imperfect.



As a Restoration Movement Christian, I look back to the church established by Jesus Christ – to the doctrine taught by the apostles and recorded in Scripture, and I am pleased to come from that lineage; I gladly and proudly claim that line. But I know the line from Acts 2 to me isn't straight, quick, or easy. My awareness and gratitude turn to amazement and wonder when I consider how many people it took to get the gospel to me and get me to the gospel.

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." Isaac Newton penned these words to a colleague in 1675, humbly acknowledging scientific legacy and the continuity of knowledge. Newton knew *more* because previous scientists had known *some.* The same is true for you and me. Not just with science – or business, art, letters, athletics, and the like, but with Christian theology and spiritual understanding. We would all do well to remember our own giants, from whose shoulders we see all of creation.

Of course, it all starts with God and His creation, then the long line of people who sought to know Him and His Word. Think of the lineages in Genesis, the Davidic line, the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, the "By faith" giants of Hebrews 11, and our own faith-DNA relation to Father Abraham (Gal. 3:7), who, as the song says, had many sons. I am one of them, and so are you. And all of us have looked to the Lord, to Christ, to the Word, to "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79b). We couldn't do it on our own.

I am grateful for the early church, for its bold Spirit-led faithfulness and biblical diligence. I am grateful for the Protestant Reformation, for its many reformers and their acknowledgment of the five *solas*. I am grateful for the Restoration Movement and its humble awareness that we are "Christians only" and should "sink into union with the Body of Christ at large." I am grateful for the Great Awakenings and their calls for the sleeper to rise in revival.

I am thankful for the Bible translators and printers, for the many missionaries and martyrs. I am thankful for the shepherds of the church, for the multitude of Bible teachers and preachers, those who taught others to teach others. Can you see the spiritual legacy we have received and notice the continuity of spiritual knowledge we are a part of? Have you noticed the giants?

As I sit in the quiet of the still-dark morning, drinking coffee while my lovely family still sleeps and God's work for me waits patiently, I read and pray. That's my quiet time, my Bible time. And as I sit with a Bible that has come to me from the mouth of God – through the Spirit, across the ages, because of His workers who were victorious over obstacles and persecution – I am humbled and thankful.

And if – while I sit peacefully with scores of translations in my hand, next to stacks of commentaries – if I eventually have a profound thought or finally realize the truth of an elusive passage, I cannot be proud of myself. But I can turn and look at you, standing on the other shoulder and looking out, and say, "Hello, brother." And thank the Lord.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe. (ESV)

"IN HIS PRESENCE" *"In Your presence is fullness of joy."* (Psalm 16:11 NASB)

Craig Barge, Vega Baja, PR • **Carl Bridges,** Knoxville, TN • **Adela (Cook) Breaux,** Garden Valley, CA • **Maridel (Yoder) Braman,** Grimes, IA • **Kevin Dooley,** Clayton, IN • **Anna Mae Ducommun,** Eldon, MO • **Cheryl (Cochran) Henry,** Loveland, CO • **Valla Marie Kenworthy,** Mooresville, IN • **Mary McCoy,** Conway, AR • **Dennis Fulton,** McDonough, GA • **Carol Ann Morrison,** Carl Junction, MO • **Bill Putman,** Post Falls, ID • **Jenn Robinett,** Vancouver, WA • **John C. Samples,** Indianapolis, IN • **David Melvin Traxler,** Mesa, AZ •

FALL APPEAL

POEM's annual Fall Appeal is made with the hope of creating digital content for our readers and supporters. Though we still desire to mail print versions of *The Knowlesletter* and *One Body,* we know that there are many current and future readers who prefer to access their media online. We believe that the work of POEM can increase and reach farther if we make our publications available digitally as well as in print. Your one-time gift, sent to us in the reply envelope included, will help us to eventually bring encouraging, educational, and edifying literature to more people worldwide. We thank you in advance for your continued (or first-time) support of Peace On Earth Ministries.



BOOKMARKS: WHAT I'VE BEEN READING



"By the grace of God, I still have a childlike faith that the Body of Christ can unite during my lifetime. I may be crazy, but as the world gets more divided, I actually believe this is the exact time that God wants to unite His Kingdom. I keep imagining how happy we will be as we start coming together. It's what we want. We were created for unity, saved to be unified, and will spend eternity worshipping as one Body." ~ Francis Chan, *Until Unity*

NEWS & NOTES

In September, Jenny taught the Bible class at the Sisters Retreat Weekend held at Sharon Bluffs Camp. The weekend's theme was *Devoted,* based on the book of Ruth, the same theme as this year's week of Girls Camp held at the campgrounds in July. The weekend retreat was also an opportunity to check out the long-awaited new camp bathhouse, which was funded in part by our readers. • Lincoln preached "From Humility to Forgiveness" from Matthew 18 on Mission Sunday, Sept. 27, at the Mt. Hope church. • Victor & Evelyn attended services for **Carol Ann Morrison,** 83, a longtime member at Mt. Hope on Sept. 29. • Victor preached "Traveling with Jesus" on Oct. 11 at the Nashville, MO, church. • He also preached three sermons at the Winigan, MO, Church Rally, Oct. 16-18. The theme was "Just a Closer Walk with Christ." **Mike & Deborah York** minister at Winigan. The Gateway Singers (**Don & Vikki Hunt, Dave & Jan McSpadden**) sang at each well-attended service. • Victor & Evelyn enjoyed a short visit to Texas Oct. 21-23 to see their daughter **Emily Martin's** family. • Both Victor & Evelyn and Lincoln & Jenny attended the ARM Prison Outreach Vision Dinner at Ozark Christian College Oct. 24, attended by 350 people. The theme was "God's Word Planted. Character Rebuilt." **Troy Nelson** is the President of ARM, and **Matt Thomas,** Director of Firm Foundation Ministries, was the guest speaker. • **Joel & Mary Ellen Solliday,** Lewiston, ID, visited Joplin Oct. 24-25. Joel writes the "Insight at the Intersection of Art & Faith" column for *One Body.* • Victor preached "Joy in Contentment" from Phil. 4 at Mt. Hope on Oct. 25 to close out a sermon series in Philippians, and "A Grateful Heart" from Psalm 100 on Nov. 1 to start a new sermon series on "Thanks & Giving."





THOUGHTS ON THANKFULNESS

- "Be thankful for the thorns and thistles, which keep you from being in love with this world, and becoming an idolater." ~ Charles Spurgeon
- "God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say 'Thank You?'" ~ William Arthur Ward
- "Gratitude is thankfulness expressed in action." ~ William George Jordan
- "In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit." ~ Albert Schweitzer
- "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow." ~ Helen Keller
- "No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." ~ James Allen
- "Reflect on your present blessings of which every man has many – not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." ~ Charles Dickens
- "The gift of old age is God's gift. Accept it gratefully. If you rage against it, deny it, wish it away, you won't have peace." ~ Elisabeth Elliott
- "The very fact that a man is thankful implies someone to be thankful to." ~ John Baillie
- "We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction." ~ Harry Ironside

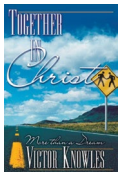
HIDE IN YOUR HEART

"Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule in your hearts. And be thankful." (Colossians 3:15 MEV)

THE FIVE:

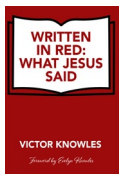
$20 each (the latest book, Our Godly Guest, is $25). Make checks to POEM.











IN MEMORY OF

Jeff Deys
Art Deys

Lois Zimmerman

POEM
PEACE ON EARTH MINISTRIES
"Proclaiming peace to the nations" Zech. 9:10

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STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS

By John Teal

One Sunday in the 1980s, serving as a campus minister, I found myself standing at the crossroads in front of our church building. I was debating whether to walk into the worship service or turn around and leave. The singing had started, and the doors were closed. Tragically, these were not the only closed doors. My heart had been closing for some time, and I was largely blind to it along the way. I had not guarded my heart well (Prov. 4:23). I thought I was building on the rock, but clearly the opposite was true (Matt 7:24-27).

I was a young, ambitious dreamer running on my strength and not God's. I was a weary youth ready to stumble (Isa. 40:30-31). I was trying to live up to what I perceived others wanted, and in the process, I was not honest with myself or others. I ignored my fears, doubts, struggles, and even my questions about God and His word. Moreover, I struggled with pride, legalism, and a sectarian spirit. The perfect storm had come, and now I was facing reality.

There I was, standing in the street, wrestling with whether I should walk in or pack up my truck and head home to Michigan. Then I thought about the extremely heavy, antique, solid maple dresser my grandmother had given me. Living in a second-floor apartment, I knew I could not carry it down the narrow stairwell by myself, and I could not leave it behind. And so, I decided to walk into church. This began the long road of reconstructing my faith. That dresser served as an anchor for my soul. Not the dresser itself, but rather the relationship with my grandmother. It was a relational and historical mooring that I will never forget.

Some within the Stone Campbell Movement (SCM) are dangerously untethered from the better angels of our heritage – voices of reason, unity, biblical wisdom, hope, vision, and experience. Are these not voices that we should know well and listen to?

In the USA, individualism is deeply embedded in our DNA. We tend to strike out on our own and cut new paths. But, in so doing, we can lose the value of community, experience, and heritage. We are left alone to struggle and repeat the mistakes of our ancestors. The other option is to listen to those who have gone before us. To learn from their journey, mistakes, struggles, and victories.

The written word has allowed me to sit at the feet of courageous men of faith: Barton W. Stone, Alexander Campbell, Leroy Garrett, Carl Ketcherside, James DeForest Murch, James North, Rick Atchley, Bob Russell, Ben Brewster, Douglas A. Foster, and more. I have gained tutoring for my life and have grown in my faith. These men have sought, or are seeking, to bring Christians together in unity rather than divide them into "us and them." In my view, this is a sustainable way forward for our heritage.

From *One Kingdom: Essays in Honor of Christian Unity.* John Teal leads Common Grounds Unity. Find out more at commongroundsunity.org

WE'VE GOT M@IL

Lincoln and Jenny, I am delighted at the way you have taken responsibility of carrying on what Victor and Evelyn have worked at for years. May God bless your efforts. **Susan Babcock, Creighton, NE** • Loved your article "For Her My Tears Shall Fall" in the October *Knowlesletter!* "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord" is one of my favorite hymns, too. Blessings! **John Cunyus, Dallas, TX** • Jenny, your article on Charlie Kirk was something most people in our country aren't aware of. Thank you for sharing this story. I would also like to thank everyone who shares their comments in "We've Got Mail." **Elaine Recoy, Promise City, IA** • Thank you for your ministry. I pray that we would be one as the Father and the Son are one. I also pray that we would rally around the seven "ones" in Ephesians 4 and allow God to accomplish what the body of Christ could be on this earth! **Stanley Sadler, Littlefield, TX** • Thanks for your daily witness to others. It is truly a commitment to pen words each day. We are blessed! **Peggy Hollingsworth,** via email • Victor, we are still in awe of this last weekend. It was so wonderful of you and Evelyn to be here with our church family. Your three sermons were so great, encouraging, and uplifting. Evelyn was so sweet and caring to our ladies. **Deborah York,** Winigan, MO

Thank you all for your faithful support, for your prayers, and for your letters and notes of encouragement. It is always good to hear from you. Keep praying, keep the fellowship, and keep pressing on! ~ **Lincoln**

Write me: lincoln@poeministries.org

VIEWPOINT



BY VICTOR KNOWLES

THE GREAT UNITY SALUTATION

Every one of Paul's 13 letters includes the words "grace" and "peace" in the salutation. It's as though he couldn't write anything else until he had first greeted the Christians with these two beautiful and beneficial words. Paul always mentions grace before peace. Grace, God's unmerited and undeserved favor, is the fountain from which all blessings flow. "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Peace is the result, the realization, and the reward of the one who has been saved by grace. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Salvation from sin brings satisfaction to the soul.

However, Paul signs off each of 13 letters with only the word "grace." Paul had learned from the Lord that grace was sufficient. "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor. 12:9). Grace is the firm foundation in the house of God, and peace is the roof under which we live in harmony with one another.

In Paul's day, the Greeks would greet one another with the word *chairein.* This word was similar to *charis* (charm, favor), the word that charmed Paul and that he favored in his writings: *grace.* Although Paul used the Greek word for peace, *eirene,* from which we get our English adjective *irenic* and the woman's name *Irene,* he knew full well that it sprang from the Hebrew root word *shalom,* an ancient word meaning "peace" that is still used by Jewish people when they meet or part with a friend. *Shalom* means both the temporal and spiritual health of a person – a person's highest good. The Romans greeted one another with a word signifying health, an intermediate salutation of both grace and peace. Paul's signature salutation of "grace and peace" was a masterstroke. He took the choicest words of greeting from both Gentile and Jewish worlds and joined them together in a great unity salutation. And what God has joined together, let no man put asunder!

Paul, like Jesus, had a great concern for the unity of all believers. He stated that all who are "in Christ" (an expression he used more than 80 times) are one. Whether they were Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female, circumcised, uncircumcised, Barbarian, or Scythian (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11) mattered not one whit to him. Paul's great concern sprang from the passion of Christ who longed to gather Jerusalem's children together (Luke 13:34), fervently desired "other sheep" to be added to His fold (John 10:16), and earnestly prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-21).

When Paul penned an epistle, he opened with this great unity salutation: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:3 et al.).

> ***"Grace is the firm foundation in the house of God, and peace is the roof under which we live in harmony with another."***

Paul Butler said, "Unity has its origin or source in the nature and character of God. Grace and peace come from God our Father and Jesus Christ." Yes, grace and peace come from God, but sometimes men withhold it! Grace and peace emanate from God our Father, but He is not the exclusive property of any one man or group of men. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "*Our* Father, who is in heaven." Paul declared, "There is . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4, 6). William Barclay said, "It would be greatly to our good if sometimes we lifted up our eyes beyond our own little circle and thought of ourselves as part of the church of God which is as wide as the world." Dear Lord, lift our eyes!

Grace and peace also come from the Lord Jesus Christ. "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us" (Eph. 2:14). This was a costly peace, because Christ made peace "through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20).

The great unity salutation is all-inclusive. Paul wrote, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all who in every place* call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, *both theirs and ours:* Grace and peace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2-3). Please notice that he wrote to the church *of God* in Corinth. The church in Corinth had no copyright on Christ. Christ was available for *all* people in *every* place who called on His name. He still is! Jesus is Lord of all who call on Him, regardless of nationality, race, color, or creed. We decry Him when we deny them! The ground is level at the foot of the cross. There is room for all in the Father's house. "Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth, her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth" (Samuel J. Stone).

Two are better than one. Two are needed for oneness. Paul's trademark greeting reminds us that through grace and peace we have oneness in Christ. Hey, it's enough to write home about!