

Journal
1997 January to March

We received this computer in December 1996. I am just learning how to use it. I had an old one that I first learned to use. It was mostly used for a word processor. I had that one pretty well under control, but now this one is so different, and has so many more features on it. The children wanted me to get it, so I could get America Online. I get so disgusted with their many features that I sometimes wish I had the old one back. But time goes on and takes us with it.

We now attend church here at Ridgeview, an Evangelical Free church where Frank Chivalette is the pastor. He is good. He stays by the scripture in his preaching and I can take a lot of unnecessary things in a church if the preaching is good. It is a far cry from the Amish or Mennonite church where we got our roots. It has some youth activities that are clearly out of my line of reasoning, but I am now an old man and must just keep my place where God has assigned to me and not try to dictate to others what is right and wrong.

(Added later) We enjoyed this pastor (Frank Chivalette) for a little less than a year. He was very energetic, but was susceptible to heart attack. And on September 17, 1997, he was found dead in the church office, with his hand holding the phone. Now it's different. The Lord was finished with his ministry and it threw the assembly into a tail spin. But he did leave a good board of elders, and they seem to take it in stride. In this interim we just have speakers come in on a Sunday Morning. I am scheduled to speak on the last Sunday of October, the 26th.

I enjoy the freedom of religion that is practiced there; nobody looking down at you, and try to correct your walk. The Pastor has told me to teach one of the adult Sunday School classes. It is the first time in my life that I have attended a church where I can be free to express what I believe. In the Amish church I was not allowed to express my faith in the Lord Jesus as my very own personal Savior and being sure that he has accepted me in the Beloved. To them, God was not really personal, one in whom you became intimate with. To them he seems to be a tribal Deity, the God of the Amish church, and with the Mennonites, the same spirit prevailed. To them God is someone to be feared and obeyed lest you displease him and he cast you into hell. To them your conduct, and character determined your acceptance or rejection by God. It is strictly a works system, a humanistic philosophy. There are many good people in it. They love the Lord but they are in such bondage and not allowed to really express what they believe in their hearts.

Our church history is spasmodic. We have been to different churches. It was hard for me to get rid of the human tradition in which I was cradled and reared. The Lord used this experience to teach me how hard it was for the Jews steeped in the Mosaic tradition under the law. To let go of that and accept the doctrine that Christ died for our sins and he takes them all away.

I have written a commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. The Pastor told me to teach a class on that epistle and, when this is done, he said I am supposed to teach the same lesson to another group.

I enjoy it, and I am free to teach what I believe personally. It is hard on my nerves, due to the stress. May God give me the strength to perform his perfect will.

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We began attending this Evangelical Free church on October 13, 1996, because of the distance in going to Faith Chapel. This is only 3 miles, and only takes a few minutes. The first Sunday I could not stay for the preaching. My heart acted up, and we had to go home. But by now my heart seems to function much better. I eat pretty much raw food now, for breakfast and lunch. In the evening I eat some cooked food, but cannot eat red meat any more. My system is not used to it. If I do, I can tell the difference. I try to stay away from all animal product, meat milk and eggs. Turkey is tolerable, and sometimes chicken, but I enjoy the meat substitute best, it tastes like meat to me. Salina hates it.

I began teaching the Epistle to the Galatians the first of January, I really enjoy that, but it does create some stress. I love to teach the word, if I can teach whatever I believe. There are no restrictions. I had about 12 people in the first Sunday. Last Sunday there were only 7. I speak to the Lord. Salina does not even complain.

This is now January 7, 1997. We had a very mild winter so far, and the sun did not shine on Grondhog Day. Perhaps we will soon have spring.

It is hard for me in my mind to keep up with the facts of life. My nephew John R. Peachey has built for himself a retirement house, and it just seems like yesterday. When he was born I worked for Ezra's. Now he is already retiring from active farming. How can it be? I told Salina it's time that we pass from the scene of this life, when those who were babies yesterday are retiring. This is God's world and I am trying to learn that he rules it and I am just a pebble on the beach - very insignificant. Yet Christ died for me and promised me an everlasting inheritance with him in glory.

My friend Ed Ker went to Georgia expecting to preach, but when they got to Eli Burkholder's at Metter, Georgia, he had a heart attack. They took him to Savannah, and checked him out. They are not sure how much damage was done. He must have a stress test to determine how much damage has been done. I just now called him. He spoke very weak.

February 10, 1997: Salina's brother Dan had a stroke the last of January. He is now at a rehab center. His left side is paralyzed. There is hope that he can again regain most of the use of his left arm and leg.

March 6, 1997: Dan came home from the rehab center on Friday, February 28. Luke brought him home. He is in a wheel chair, mostly, but he can walk with a four-footed cane. He cannot use his left arm at all but can walk with his left leg. He cannot use a walker where two hands are needed.

I am getting better adjusted to this new computer. Now I like it. I had an enormous phone bill (\$132.00) when we first got it. We have to get lines from Danville or Willimasport and both are toll. I have been trying to get something from Milton or Lewisburg or Mifflinburg, but so far have been unsuccessful. First to get it working we had to be on the phone a lot, but now that I know better how to operate, it should not cost so much. I do not use it like many do, sit on it for hours, and look at all the world events. All I use it for is to send E-Mail. I like to keep in touch

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with my children, Willie and Irene, the rest do not have the facilities to receive E-mail yet.

I am so thankful to God that he granted me better health, much better than I ever hoped to be at one time. God is not through with me here yet. But Salina is not very well, so thin and weak, she refuses to eat the raw food diet. I cannot see how she can last very long, but she has a very strong will to live, much stronger than I do.

Gale Lynn was here today. She sells Amway products. She brought them here. She told us the basic story of the Ridgeview church.

She and Frank seem to be the pioneers. It began as a home bible study. It then came to pass they bought this building. It was built for a restaurant, but it did not work out. Dennis Gordons bought it and lived in it, but now the church bought it. Dennis was an alcoholic. One night he wrecked his car and came to Frank for psychological help. Now he plays the organ at church. Dennis seems to be doing well, has a humble attitude. His wife is different, a meet partner.

They bought the church for \$250,00.00 and borrowed most of the money from a group that specializes in church loans, and the interest paid goes back into the main fund, so that nobody is getting rich. It seems like a good idea, and God has marvelously blessed. Gale said when she came the books were in shambles. She has a knack of finances. She operates a business on helping people get back on their feet, by financial advice, somewhat like Larry Burkette. An unusual Godly woman, she has few peers. She has no children of her own, but raised 4 black children who now live around here. One daughter is going to college. She and her husband have separated. She tried to explain her salvation to him, but he cannot understand. She also apologized for her actions while they were married, which caused their demise.

March 19, 1997: I want to report a very encouraging note that the Lord brought my way. On Saturday, March 15, the Transport For Christ men, of which I belong, had our bi-monthly prayer breakfast at Stuck's Curve-Inn restaurant. I offered to do the speaking for that day. I gave out the pamphlet I have wrtten giving a short expose' of the book of Romans.

Yesterday I received a note from Glenn and Suzanne Gautsch. He drives for Wood Mode. This is what they wrote:

Dear John, We pray this note finds you having a good day. Glenn and I want to thank you for sharing your summary on Romans. We were both blessed by it. It was the high point of our weekend. God bless and continue to use you. Looking forward to seeing you next TFC. Glenn and Suzanne Gautsch. Sunbury, Pa.

The door at the church is warped, does not shut tight, lets much cold in. They say they don't have money to replace it. Salina and I spoke about it, and tentatively proposed to take it upon ourselves to replace it. Salina is hesitant, thinks I give too much money away, distrusts my motives. But I told Craig Ulmer to go ahead and get a new door and put it there. They have to be double doors, with a large glass in them, and because it is a public place they have to have crash bars, for safety. The cost will be \$1200.00. I told the pastor we will replace and pay for the

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doors if he does not publish who did it. I also told Gale Lynn, for she is the secretary.