

by Cheryl Seelhoff

A Homeschooler's History

To my knowledge, no one now homeschooling has ever attempted to compile a history of the modern homeschooling movement which includes all the varied contributions of the intelligent, interesting and – especially — diverse people who have shaped the homeschooling movement in this country.

What makes this such a difficult task is the depth, richness and texture of the fabric of the homeschooling community itself, woven and interwoven as it is with the dreams and cherished hopes of people who are as different one from another as night is different from day, yet who are bound – sometimes unwillingly! — together by their common love and concern for children and their desire to do what is right by them. Those who have homeschooled for many years have fought together to secure and to preserve that right, have loved, protected, and nurtured one another through difficulties and challenges, and have, from time to time, as human beings will, also hurt and betrayed and abandoned one another. The sad chapters of our common history have left their mark—holes, gaps, snags and tears in the fabric of our community which will only be mended in the afterglow of the healing and reconciliation which must eventually come to people who have worked so hard together to achieve common goals.

I have homeschooled my children since 1983. In the years since then, it has been my privilege, as a homeschooler, editor, and conference speaker, to work alongside and to know many hundreds of homeschoolers from every conceivable background and perspective and from all over the country and in foreign countries, too. I have kept hundreds of documents over these years – letters, newsletters, brochures, announcements, magazines. Using these records, I have done my best to begin to weave together our common community cloth. I freely acknowledge its gaps and holes and my poor weaving job – I've always had a problem getting the tension right! — and I hope people will write to me and will help me to fill in what is missing.

This is not a smooth, exultant or victorious timeline I am presenting here,

a straight-line path from glory to glory. It is, I'm afraid, a very human story, full of struggles, misunderstandings, and blunders, replete with human foibles and weaknesses. Nevertheless, reading through, I have felt so gratefully proud, of all of us. I have experienced feelings of warmth and tenderness towards some of my partners in homeschooling history for whom I believed I would never again have those feelings. I've been overwhelmed and inspired and sometimes thrilled as I've come across the wise and prophetic words of homeschooling pioneers who certainly could not have known the significance of their words when they were uttering them. Most of all I have been deeply touched as I've mulled over this very, very human history. Above all it is the history of how much people will give for a dream that they cherish. It's impossible not to be inspired, thinking about it.

So here are the tentative results of my faltering efforts, for what they are worth. Where I have erred, please correct me. Where I am missing information, please, supply it! Where I've got it all wrong, let me know. I've done my best.

One thing I believe it is very fair to say is that homeschoolers are not the kind of people to appreciate revisionist history! So please, do help me. I think it's time we applied ourselves to making a record of our common history, in the interest of creating an even better future.

Love,
Cheryl

In order to understand the homeschooling movement in this country, it is necessary to understand the role religion has played in the shaping of Western culture and civilization and especially in the shaping of United States history. Apart from an understanding of this context it is difficult to make sense of the dif-

ferences which exist among parents who have all chosen homeschooling as the best option for their families. Reading through this history, I realized how much I didn't know and how much I would have benefited, way back when I began homeschooling, had I been more aware of history.

Religion and Education

To a large extent, the Christian church created the foundation of what we know as the Western system of education. In order to maintain unity in the face of disagreements among church members, and to defend itself against external threats in the form of different religions and philosophies, Christianity developed what it called "apologetics," or an intellectual defense of the faith, along with creeds and dogmas which it passed along, via education, to the next generations.

To this end, schools for clergy and administrative and government officials were established by the Roman Catholic Church in Medieval Europe, then later by the Reformers and Counter-Reformers, because church and state were not separate in Europe until the 1800s. In fact, church officials were state officials, and church schools were also state schools.

Three Reformations

Although in the United States, when we use the word, "Reformation," we commonly mean the Protestant Reformation led by Luther, Calvin, and other reformers, in fact there were really three reformations, as follows:

- (1) The Protestant, or Magisterial, Reformation associated with three great teachers or "magisterium": Martin Luther (1483-1546) in Germany, Ulrich Zwingli (1485-1531) in Switzerland, and John Calvin (1509-1564) in Geneva. While these men differed in some ways,

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they agreed on infant baptism and that the church and state embraced everyone.

- (2) The Roman Catholic, or Counter-Reformation, which attempted to correct many weaknesses highlighted by Protestants and to regain territories lost to Protestant rulers; and
- (3) The Radical Reformation, which, in sharp contrast to the Magisterial Reformation, desired a radical separation of church and state instead of incremental reform. These were the Anabaptists, the Brethren, the Waldensians, the Quakers, and some other groups. Most of the radical reformers emphasized “believer’s baptism” and did not believe in the baptism of infants.

Calvin and Luther both emphasized salvation by grace through faith, but Calvin included in his teachings an emphasis on man’s utter depravity or innate wickedness and inability to even desire salvation, God’s sovereignty over the affairs of men, and the doctrine of election, the notion that some are predestined by God to salvation and heaven while others are doomed to be lost and to go to hell.

From amongst the third group of radical reformers, men arose who questioned many traditional church teachings, including the doctrine of the Trinity (God as three co-equal persons). Among these was the Spanish physician Michael Servetus, who was burned at the stake in Protestant Geneva, with Calvin’s assent, for heresy because he questioned teachings related to the Trinity and infant baptism. Before he was martyred, however, he had written the book, *The Restitution of Christianity*, which other members of the radical reformation carried into Poland and Transylvania and eventually across the channel into England. In fact, Servetus was the first of those who later came to be

known as Unitarians or “liberal” Protestants.

The conflicts between these men – Servetus, Calvin and Luther, and Roman Catholics — which were the result of the doctrinal differences between them, the differences in how they read and understood the Bible, what the Bible meant to them, what they understood to be God’s character, have been a force which has shaped Western and American history since the Reformation and which has shaped and continues to shape the homeschooling movement. In the homeschooling movement we have had, in fact – and we still have — our Luthers, our Calvins, our Servetuses and our Roman Catholics. We have a full complement of all of the differences and frailties which stumped these men, frustrated them, and caused them to mistreat one another (usually in the name of God!). One important thing we have that they did not have is the perspective of history, an ability to learn, understand, and evaluate the conflicts which tore them apart by looking back, studying, reflecting, attempting to understand how and why they acted as they did.

Higher Education

Over time, universities, representing a “unity” of education, formed in medieval Europe. Schools for monks and clergy gained independence by forging agreements with church and state, then taught students via lecture and disputation, in Latin, on campuses where the students lived communally, where deans were elected, and where eventually academic degrees were recognized.

In the 1500s in Europe, groups of people began to form to demand universities which were not controlled by the church, and at the same time, the Protestant Reformers created their own state universities, Marburg in 1527, Königsberg in 1544, and Jena

in 1558. The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformers then assumed leadership of the older European universities which were still Roman Catholic, or they founded new universities in Europe and overseas.

Early American Education

This tradition continued in the colonial period in the United States with colonists establishing church schools for their children or teaching their own children at home.

Colonies organized around shared denominational beliefs eventually founded their own colleges to educate both clergy and laymen, including Harvard University, founded in 1636, and Yale University, founded in 1701.

Through the late 1700s and early 1800s, children continued to be either taught at home by their parents or they were taught in church schools. Wealthy children throughout the colonies were sent to tuition schools for college preparatory courses, trade or commercial schools existed which also required tuition, and finally, for the poor, there were tax-funded “charity” schools which taught the rudiments of English, mathematics and moral education. There were no public schools and there was no compulsory education or mandatory attendance of any kind until much later.

The Unitarians

Unitarianism was first formally introduced into North America by way of Joseph Priestley, a leader in England of the group that came to be called Unitarians. He was driven from England in 1794 by continuing threats to his life, and eventually he settled in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, meeting regularly with others who shared his views. In time, together with others who had been in the United States for half a century or more, Priestley helped to form what became the first Unitarian congregation in the United States.

According to a Unitarian historian, Unitarianism was:

“a movement fundamentally characterized . . . by its steadfast and increasing de-

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

“The most central religious exercise of any culture is education ... Christian faith is thus a total concern. Christian schools are a necessity, or else we will have anti-Christian schools. For Christianity to bypass education, to neglect Christian schools, is suicidal.”

—J. Rousas Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, quoted in Samuel Blumenfeld, “The Reconstructionist View of Education”, *Chalcedon Report*, February 1996, p.12

“And if we do not have justice in our schools, how will we have it in our society, and if we don't what will become of us?...we must recognize that we are almost certainly too stunted and broken in spirit, too full of fear, greed, envy, self-doubt, self-contempt, disappointment, and rage to be able to create for the first time a society that is truly human, just, honest and peaceful, with some reasonable prospect of survival. To do that, we must have the help of a new generation of people far more intelligent, more kind, more loving and respecting of life than most of us can ever hope to be...”

—John Holt, in a review of *To the Rescue: The Lives of Children*, by George Dennison, *New York Review of Books*, October 9, 1969.

votion to these three leading principles: first, complete mental freedom in religion rather than bondage to creeds or confessions; second, the unrestricted use of reason in religion, rather than reliance upon external authority or past tradition; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and usages rather than insistence upon uniformity in doctrine, worship or polity. Freedom, reason and tolerance: it is these conditions above all others that this movement has from the beginning increasingly sought to promote.”

(—Jefferson P. Selth, *Unitarian Universalist History in Eight Minutes*) www.sksm.edu/home/misc/uuhistory8.html

Tensions and Divisions

From the settling of the colonies, there were religious tensions, divisions relating to interpretations of the Bible, especially. Even each of the colonies was homogenous – Puritans with Puritans, Separatists with Separatists, Anglicans with Anglicans, Roman Catholics with Roman Catholics – within some groups there was significant conflict, and especially so in the Puritan colonies where conservative and liberal Calvinists struggled against one another, to the point that a good number were eventually excommunicated and banished.

In 1805 a theological liberal, Henry Ware (1764-1845), became Professor of Divinity at Harvard University, assuming leadership of what had always been a conservative, Puritan establishment, an event which was to become a watershed. At that point, tensions between Evangelicals and Liberals became too great to withstand. The Evangelicals left to open their own seminary at Andover and the split between liberal and conservative Protestants was complete.

For a while the Boston Liberals avoided the Unitarian name, because they regarded Priestley and the British Unitarians as extreme, but in 1815 the orthodox Jedidiah Morse (1761-1826) reprinted a pamphlet by the British Unitarian Thomas Belsham, in which Belsham claimed the Boston

Liberals were in fact, if not in name, Unitarians, and demanded that the Liberals be exposed and denied Christian fellowship. At this point, in 1825, the Unitarians declared themselves to be a separate group.

Public Education

The late 1700s had also been a time when Americans, including many American leaders, influenced by the ideas of men like Newton, Locke, and Rousseau and the European Enlightenment, came to believe it was a mark of good government to discover and make use of the talents of gifted citizens. Thomas Jefferson, in particular, sought an “aristocracy of virtue and talents” unrelated to family or wealth — since until this time, only the wealthy could afford the tuition schools — and accomplished via the creation of free public schools which all were free to attend and where their gifts would be duly noticed. Jefferson, John Adams, and many other American leaders were rationalists who believed in an ordered world, a natural law for the universe, and natural rights for man. They also were concerned that the nation's electorate be educated and informed. For these reasons, concern with furtherance of education and educational facilities came to the forefront in the late 1700s and lands for the support of public education were set aside by Congress for that purpose. Conservative church members feared the spread of Jefferson's and Adams' and other leaders' ideas, they feared the growth of Unitarianism and other forms of liberal Protestantism, and they preferred to continue with their own church schools and fought against the establishment of public education. Their goals for their children were, first and foremost, to teach them to read the scriptures and to advance the Christian faith, and they believed those goals to be at odds with the goals of those who were pushing for public education.

In 1821 the first public high schools were established in Maine and in Massachusetts, and shortly thereafter laws were passed in Massachusetts requiring each town of more than 500 families to support a high school. This law became the pattern for the creation of public high schools in many other states in the following years.

Progressive Education

In the late 1800s there was a movement in Europe towards "progressive education", that is, education which was pragmatic and rationalistic and which involved the "whole child" and stressed the importance of learning by doing, or of learning and doing being all of a piece. Columbia University President John Dewey spearheaded the movement towards progressive education in this country, believing that via his intelligence, man could at least partly control his society and build a democratic society more productive of happiness than any previous culture. Dewey emphasized man's freedom and creativity, facts and results, and democratic reform, all notions which appealed to American pragmatism and rationalism, but which were not Christian or spiritual, earning Dewey the fear and disdain of conservative Christians up to this day.

Conservatives and conspiracy theorists believe that the drive for free public schools was part of a conscious plan spearheaded by Unitarians and the "unsaved" to convert the United States from capitalism to socialism. As evidence, they point to the utopian communities established by some Unitarians, like Robert Owens, and to Unitarian efforts which did finally culminate in the establishment of a state-run educational system in Massachusetts against the will of the Christian faithful. Some go so far as to view Dewey's promotion of the "look-say" reading method, as opposed to phonics, as a deliberate attempt on Dewey's part to actively keep America's young people illiterate and unable to read the Bible, which they believe to be the source of all knowledge. Samuel Blumenfeld, educator, homeschooling speaker, and curriculum writer, and a Christian Reconstructionist, argued in 1984, "[T]he goal was to produce inferior readers with inferior intelligence dependent on a socialist education elite for guidance, wisdom and control. Dewey knew it..." Samuel Blumenfeld, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*

In researching this article, I listened among other things to audiotapes of a homeschooling seminar which was held in 1984 in Washington state. The reconstructionist speakers emphasized the "ungodli-

ness" of those who pushed for public education in colonial America, of their socialist, feminist agenda, and they spoke of the superiority of homeschools. And there is no doubt in my mind that children who were taught in their homes by educated parents undoubtedly fared quite well, including in the earliest years of the colonial period.

But what these speakers omitted to mention was that higher education and even trade schools, before the establishment of public schools, were limited to children from wealthy families who could pay tuition, and that the many who were struggling to survive, to eke out a living, to provide food and shelter for their families, would have had little time to devote to education. Their children would have had to join them in supporting the family in many instances with little chance of living lives any differently than those their parents lived.

The speakers also failed to mention that in those years, the debate raged over whether it was ever proper to teach a woman to read, that women were, by and large, chattel, owned by men, not allowed to vote or sign contracts. It was lawful in many jurisdictions in these times for husbands to beat their wives as long as the implement they used was no thicker than their thumb, i.e., the "Rule of Thumb." These were also the years of slavery and of often oppressive work conditions for those who earned their living in factories.

Those who pushed for public education undoubtedly viewed it as a partial answer to the disenfranchisement and oppression and poverty being suffered by women, African Americans, and the poor in a nation otherwise bursting with opportunity, just as those who believed in homeschooling and church schools can be assumed to have viewed it as an answer to the issues which troubled them and their fellow man as well. The nation's churches and accompanying church schools, while they served church members capably and well, offered little or nothing to those who were not a member of those churches and could not attend them. What was to become of these people? What kind of lives could they be expected to make for themselves?

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

"[Dr. Rushdoony] has been called the father of the homeschooling movement, and with good reason. Back in the late 50s and early 60s when he was documenting the bankruptcy of government education, most Christians blithely sent their children to those Satanic hothouses with little thought of the evils there. Unfortunately, most professing Christians still send them there. But the percentages are changing...In the 70s, especially, when churches and Christian schools came under increasing attack by a hostile civil government, [Dr. Rushdoony] would travel at Chalcedon's expense, to serve as an expert witness in landmark and other important church state cases. Many times, as a result of [his] knowledgeable testimony, the Christians, not to mention religious liberty, would come out victors."

—Andrew Sandlin, "A Comprehensive Faith", *Chalcedon Report*, No. 363, July 1996, p. 3.

"Religions that fail to dominate and control education and law quickly become fading relics of the past, as was the case in the United States by 1950. The philosophy of John Dewey provided the non-theistic common faith of much of the world, especially the United States, and Deweyism was the humanistic religion of education taught by Dewey and his successors."

—J. Rousas Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report*, No. 405, April 1999.

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

"More than 10,000 families – no one knows exactly how many – are teaching their children, most of them with the approval of legal authorities. To be sure, in all states, compulsory education laws do say that children have to go to school. But the language of these laws and the ways in which the courts have interpreted them, allow parents to teach their children.

Some families work out arrangements with their local public schools; some enroll their children in private schools that approve a home study program; some simply register their homes as private schools.

"How does it all work out? Very well. With few exceptions, homeschooled children learn more things and learn them faster and better, have more contact with adults and are socially better adjusted and more adaptive than most children in schools..."

—John Holt, "More Parents Saying No to Schools",
Newsday, April 30, 1982

"No one can truly say yes to something, be it an experience or another person's offer of love, if he or she cannot truly say no. No one can fully and freely give love if she or he does not have the unquestioned right to withhold it."

—John Holt, from *Escape from Childhood*, E.P. Dutton, 1974.

The Earliest Unschooler

I believe that what we call "unschooling" has roots in this same progressive movement which originated in Europe and which influenced John Dewey. Other educators whose names might be familiar to homeschoolers or those interested in alternative education are Maria Montessori and A.S. Neill, who wrote the book *Summerhill*.

Neill was born in Forfar, Scotland in 1883, the fourth of 13 children and the son of the village schoolmaster or 'Dominie', a "stern, puritanical man who ruled his classroom with a rod of iron. In those days the strap or 'tawse' was commonly used in schools in Scotland and when at the age of 15 Neill was taken on as a pupil teacher by his father, he was expected to use it on the other children.

"At the age of 25, Neill went to Edinburgh University and took a degree in English. Afterwards he became a journalist, and later head of a small school in Gretna Green. It was there that he wrote his first book, *A Dominie's Log*, and began to form his ideas about the lives and education of children:

"I have converted a hard-working school into a playground, and I rejoice. These bairns have had a year of happiness and liberty. They have done what they liked; they have sung their songs while they were working at graphs, they have eaten their sweets while they read their books, they have hung on my arms as we rambled along in search of artistic corners."
www.s-hill.demon.co.uk

Later, Neill wrote:

"I am only just realising the absolute freedom of my scheme of Education. I see that all outside compulsion is wrong, that inner compulsion is the only value. And if Mary or David wants to laze about, lazing about is the one thing necessary for their personalities at the moment. Every moment of a healthy child's life is a working moment. A child has no time to sit down and laze. Lazing is abnormal, it is a recovery, and therefore it is necessary when it exists."
www.s-hill.demon.co.uk

Although Neill's philosophies did not take root other than with a small segment of the population, they were stimulating and thought provoking. He got people thinking in new and creative and unusual ways about how children learn, wondering whether there might be factors which they had never considered.

How Homeschooling Freedoms Were Won

It was not until the turn of the 20th century that state-funded public education became mandatory for children in the United States. After public education was made mandatory, children were still taught at home under some circumstances, in wilderness areas where there were no schools, for instance, and children also continued to receive instruction in church-sponsored schools. In increasing numbers, church schools began to be pressured by local authorities to conform to public school standards, and in the 1920s, government officials filed suit against a Roman Catholic school in an attempt to close it down and force its students into public schools.

In a landmark decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that "the fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments of this union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the creature of the state."
1925 Pierce v. Society of Sisters 268 U.S. 510 (1925)

This ruling was given an expansive construction by the United States Supreme Court in another case, *Georgia v. Blankenship*, where the Court ruled that *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* stood for the proposition that:

"... the values of parental direction of the religious upbringing and education of their children in their early and formative years have a high place in our society...Thus, a state's interest in universal education, however highly we rank it, is not totally free from a balancing process when it impinges on fundamental rights and interests, such as those specifically protected by the Free Exercise Clause

of the First Amendment, and the traditional interest of parent with respect to the religious upbringing of their children so long as they, in the words of Pierce, 'prepare [them] for additional obligations.'" 402 U.S. at 213-214

In the 1950s, the State of Wisconsin imprisoned several Amish fathers for violating compulsory attendance laws by refusing to send their children to public school past eighth grade.

In a landmark decision which paved the way for homeschooling and for the private religious school movement which occurred shortly thereafter, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1972 upheld the rights of these Amish fathers and set forth three elements which must be established in religious freedom cases of this nature:

1. The party objecting to State law must hold sincere religious beliefs conflicting with the laws;
2. The State must be shown to interfere with the religious rights of the individual by interfering with that individual's religiously motivated conduct;
3. If these first two elements exist, a balancing test is applied to determine if the State's interest is so compelling as to outweigh the individual's religious rights.

In the Yoder case the courts found that the first two elements did exist, and that the State's interest was not compelling and did not outweigh the individual's right to the free exercise of religion. Amish children could leave school after eighth grade and society was not harmed by this action. The State of Wisconsin's compulsory attendance regulation was declared invalid because the State could not show a compelling interest or demonstrate that their goal could not be achieved in a less restrictive way.

Prior to *Yoder*, courts had consistently ruled against individuals; now they were compelled to balance the State's rights as against the individual's rights, with the burden of proof upon the state to demonstrate that society is harmed if its compulsory laws are not followed. If after applying the *Yoder* criteria and the balancing test, the state cannot demonstrate that society will be harmed if

the law is not followed, then their compulsory law will be held to be unconstitutional. In fact, the *Yoder* decision resulted in a broadening of religious freedom for the individual where the only people affected are those religiously objecting to certain laws.

After the *Yoder* decision, the Christian school movement exploded with new schools opening every day. The *Yoder* decision had additional ramifications for all people, not just those, for example, who make decisions based on religious conviction. As a result of the Court's decision, the courts had to balance the State's interests against the rights of individuals when there was a test. For example, people who choose not to immunize their children enjoyed far greater protection as a result of this decision than would have been the case had the State's compelling interest been the main consideration as it was in the past.

I have always found it intriguing that our rights and freedoms as homeschoolers were not won by political activism, nor by running for office or the amassing power of whatever kind or getting legislation passed through state legislatures. Our rights and freedoms were won by the courage of parents who were willing to take responsibility for their own children, even when to do so meant they must suffer. They were willing to go to jail, to go through years and years of litigation, to work within the existing framework of laws to pursue their rights as parents to raise their children as they saw fit.

The Fathers of Homeschooling, Plural

During the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, there were several men and women who were interested in the education of children and who were dedicating their lives to studying, thinking, researching the subject. Some of these people were Christians, and some were not. Some had been influenced by the Progressive Education movement of the early 1900s, and some had not. What they all shared in common was a love of and concern for children and families.

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

"To control the future requires the control of education and of the child. Hence, for Christians to tolerate statist education, or to allow their children to be trained thereby, means to renounce power in society, to renounce their children, and to deny Christ's lordship over all of life."

—J. Rousas Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, quoted in Samuel Blumenfeld, *The Reconstructionist View of Education*, Chaldeon Report, No. 367, February 1996, p.12

... the greatest teaching is best done "one on one." The best remedial teaching and the best creative teaching have both been done this way for centuries. The lives of John Wesley, Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Douglas MacArthur, Pearl Buck, Hans Christian Andersen, artists Andrew Wyeth and his son, Jamie, are examples of home-educated youngster who were given the freedom to explore. They were not restrained in classrooms which to many are cages. They were given the freedom of the little lambs... that they were. Their mothers and fathers lovingly shepherded them, warmly responded to them, and provided sound parental examples."

—Raymond and Dorothy Moore, *Home Style Teaching. A Handbook for Parents and Teachers*, Word Books, Waco, TX, 1984, p. 36

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

“The great issues of the years ahead is the developing battle between Christianity and humanism. It is a war unto death. Christianity is a world and life view and faith, and it an only exist as such. It either is the word of God for every area or none.”

—J. Rousas Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, quoted in Samuel Blumenfeld, “The Reconstructionist View of Education”, *Chalcedon Report*, February 1996, p.12

“What is lovely about children is that they can make such a production, such a big deal, about everything, or nothing...I never want to be where I cannot see [them]. All that energy and foolishness, all that curiosity, questions, talk, all those fierce passions, inconsolable sorrows, immoderate joys, seem to many a nuisance to be endured, if not a disease to be cured. To me they are a national asset, a treasure beyond price, more necessary to our health and our very survival than any oil or uranium or name what you will...”

“Little children love the world. That is why they are so good at learning about it. For it is love, not tricks and techniques of thought, that lies at the heart of all true learning. Can we bring ourselves to let children grow through that love?”

—Susannah Sheffer in a review of *How Children Learn* by John Holt, published in *Growing Without Schooling*

One of these men was John Holt, a Massachusetts fifth grade teacher, who in 1964 wrote a book which became a national best seller, *How Children Fail*, described as “the original best seller about how even the ‘brightest’ kids in the “best” schools are made stupid by their fear of humiliation, by school’s separation from life, and by the assumption kids will only learn what they are taught.” (*GWS Catalog*) Three years later, Holt wrote *How Children Learn*, followed by many other books, to include *Escape from Childhood, Freedom and Beyond*, and *Teach Your Own*. Holt was an unpretentious and humble man, a keen observer of children, and a great writer, and he made many appearances on national television. He traversed the country speaking and wrote articles for national magazines and newspapers on the subject of school reform, the education of children, and homeschooling. On occasion he was called upon to testify on behalf of a homeschooling family facing trouble with local authorities or before state legislative bodies.

At about this same time, in the early 1960s, another man, operating out of a very different belief system and set of goals and ideals, but with similar dedication and commitment, wrote two very different books. The man was Dr. Rousas J. Rushdoony, and the books were *The Messianic Character of American Education* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1961), and *Intellectual Schizophrenia*, published in 1963. Perhaps Dr. Rushdoony became motivated to write these books as he followed the New York case which resulted in prayer being banned in schools by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1962 (*Engel v. Vitale*). Dr. Rushdoony was and is a staunch Calvinist and a Reconstructionist who was vehemently opposed to Christian children attending public schools and who believes true education is not possible apart from a biblical foundation.

It wouldn’t be a stretch to imagine that across the country in Illinois, another Calvinist and Reconstructionist, Dr. Paul Lindstrom, might have been reading and pondering Dr. Rushdoony’s books. Maybe he also read some of the books and articles and heard some of the television broadcasts relating to school reform and home schooling from John Holt’s perspective.

In any event, in 1968, Dr. Lindstrom established Christian Liberty Academy in the basement of the church he was pastoring. During this same year, in response to the capture of the U.S. Navy ship *Pueblo* by the North Koreans, Lindstrom established the “Remember the *Pueblo*,” committee and recruited homeschooling families from among those who joined with him in distributing materials and organizing rallies until the crew of the *Pueblo* was released. Throughout the 70s, when some of these families began to face truancy and neglect charges for homeschooling, Lindstrom traveled the country and testified in their defense as an expert witness. **Quentin Johnston**, www.chalcedon.edu/report/98mar/Johnston_Christian_Schooling.html

In yet another state, there were two more Christians who had, themselves, homeschooled, who had studied homeschooling and education, conducted extensive research, and made homeschooling their life’s work. Devout Seventh Day Adventists, Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy Moore, who holds a Master’s Degree and is a reading expert, had begun homeschooling their own children in 1944 and had begun their own work of working with homeschooling families, speaking and writing nationally about homeschooling issues, and testifying for homeschooling families in court as expert witnesses and to legislative bodies and private organizations.

The First Homeschool Publication

In 1977, the first newsletter aimed specifically at homeschooling families and those interested in homeschooling was begun by John Holt’s organization, *Growing Without Schooling*. *Growing Without Schooling* was described as an “exchange between people who have taken or would like to take their kids out of school. What to do instead; shared ideas and experiences; legal information; a directory of ‘unschoolers’; many other helpful ideas and resources.”

The *Growing Without Schooling* catalog offered an amazing assortment of books and resources through “John Holt’s Book and Music Store” including children’s inexpensive cellos and violins, books for children and adults, puzzles, toys, t-shirts, art supplies,

and resources related to living simply, gardening, nomadic furniture building, whole foods cookbooks, unschooling, "small is beautiful" economic theory, environmental issues, and special documents written by John Holt, including a "Constitutional Basis of Home Schooling," which contained legal arguments, sample model proposals for parents to use with school districts, court decisions in homeschooling cases and transcripts of John Holt's testimony before state legislative bodies considering changing homeschooling laws.

The following year, in 1978, the Home Based Education Program (Clonlara School) in Michigan started with three students under the direction of Dr. Pat Montgomery. This early umbrella school was unique in that it provided services, materials, practical help and counsel to those known as "unschoolers," a term coined by John Holt and meaning families who do not practice a rigid school-at-home approach with traditional classroom hours and curriculum, but in which children are helped by their parents to explore their worlds when and as they are ready, without pressure or coercion.

By 1982, homeschooling was legal in 40 states. It was either permitted outright by favorable legislation, permitted when homeschools incorporated as private schools, permitted in the event of religious or conscientious reasons, or permitted as a result of court cases which homeschooling families had successfully won. In the remaining 10 states it was legal if it was overseen by a certified teacher, full- or part-time. Only in Puerto Rico did homeschooling remain illegal. (Charles Marston, New Hampshire State Department of Education, 1980, Patricia Lines, Education Commission of the States, 1982, The Hewitt Research Foundation, 1975, 1982, as shown in Raymond Moore, *Home Spun Schools*, Hewitt Research, Michigan 1982, pp. 141-143) Many homeschoolers of this time believed, and still believe, that parents should stand on their constitutional right to homeschool their children and that state laws which regulate homeschooling are ultimately not a good thing. It is true that despite favorable legislation, regulations or court cases, homeschooling parents were

confronted and sometimes prosecuted by government officials, either because the officials didn't know the laws, didn't like the laws, wanted to test the laws, or because the laws were ambiguous.

Also, some homeschooling parents themselves tested the laws, refusing to obey them on the basis that they were an infringement on their constitutional rights; in other words, these parents practiced civil disobedience. But it is also true that homeschoolers, slowly but surely, were finding it possible to homeschool free of government harassment, even when laws were intimidating. Quite often all it took was a letter or a phone call to an official, a copy of the applicable laws and an explanation, and especially, a willingness to communicate with and to educate school and government officials. When school and government officials understood what parents were trying to accomplish and how they were going about it, their concerns came to an end and they sometimes went away feeling more comfortable with homeschooling than they had been before.

In 1982, *Growing Without Schooling* magazine published a letter from a family who had sought and received, on its own, approval to homeschool from Boston school officials. This was the first instance known to *GWS* in which a family was able, on its own, to deal successfully with a big city bureaucracy.

Again in this same year, 1982, following the passage of homeschooling legislation in Louisiana and Arizona, and after having been contacted by homeschoolers in a midwestern state who had talked with a legislator interested in introducing a homeschool bill, John Holt wrote and published a *Preliminary Draft of Proposed Home Schooling Legislation* in *Growing Without Schooling*. Introducing the *Preliminary Draft*, Holt wrote:

"Until now, home schoolers have not pursued a very active policy in the state legislatures, and with good reason; if the education laws as they stand, however unsatisfactory, make home schooling possible, why tinker with them? ...Instead, we have contented ourselves with trying, on the

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

...schools assume that children are not interested in learning and are not much good at it, that they will not learn unless made to, that they cannot learn unless shown how, and that the way to make them learn is to divide up the prescribed material into a sequence of tiny tasks to be mastered one at a time, each with its appropriate morsel and shock. And when this method doesn't work, the schools assume there is something wrong with the children—something they must try to diagnose and treat...

The easily observable fact is that children are passionately eager to make as much sense as they can of the world around them, are extremely good at it, and do it as scientists do, by creating knowledge out of experience. Children observe, wonder, find, or make and then test the answers to the questions they ask themselves...

When they are compelled, instead, to act like laboratory rats learning tricks, a few of them, clever answer-repeaters, teacher-readers, and test-guessers, produce a feeble but plausible imitation of learning. Most do even that badly and many, including some very bright kids, simply refuse to try. The results are familiar to all of us.

—John Holt, "School's Out: Why Teachers Fail", *The Progressive*, April, 1984, p. 32

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

“Children are reared and educated in state schools stripped of Biblical Faith and morality. They are taught that values are not eternal but self-chosen, valid only for themselves. This is the mental framework of the psychopath, a total irresponsibility to God and to man. He is the logical product of our schools and culture and his numbers will only increase unless autonomy, self-law, is replaced by theonomy, God’s law. Unless we have theonomy, men and nations will alike be governed by self-law, autonomy.”

—J. Rousas Rushdoony, “Psychopaths”, *Chalcedon Report*, No. 392, March 1998.

“At the same time I was seeing more and more evidence that most adults actively distrust and dislike most children, even their own, and quite often especially their own. They also feel that the most important thing children have to learn is how to work, that is, when their time comes, to be able, and willing, to hold down full-time painful jobs of their own. The best way to get them ready to do this is to make school as much like a full-time painful job as possible. As long as such parents are in the majority, and in every social class they are, the schools, even if they wanted to, and however much they might want to, will not be able to move very far in the directions I and many others have for years been urging them to go.”

—John Holt, *Teach Your Own*, (New York: Dell, 1981).

whole fairly successfully, to prevent the legislatures from passing laws that would make home schooling difficult or impossible... best of all would be laws that state specifically and unambiguously that parents may, without undue restrictions or interference, teach their own children. Until fairly recently I would have said that there was so little chance of getting such laws passed that it was hardly worthwhile making the effort. Now I am not so sure.”

GWS Issue #30

1983

In 1983, Dr. Pat Montgomery of Clonlara reported success in helping homeschooling families in her program when they were confronted by government officials:

“In the current school year, 37 home school families were contacted by local school officials. Two were threatened with a court suit...Each of the 38 consulted with HBEP and let us handle the contacts. None of the families had to consult a lawyer; none was taken to court...”

GWS Issue #39

The Battle Over “Secular Humanism”

A number of organizations sprang up in the early 80s which were dedicated to “communicating a Christian worldview in the classroom.” The Mel Gablers of Texas, in particular, began evaluating public school textbooks and publishing reports as to which textbooks, in their opinion, were influenced by “secular humanism” or contained information which they believed “violated biblical principles”. The Gablers urged parents to band together and to confront schoolboards over objectionable textbooks and to work to see them removed from the classroom and from school libraries.

Another organization founded in 1983 was the National Association of Christian Educators, led by Dr. Robert L. Simonds, which published two books which were widely circulated in conservative Christian circles: *Communicating a Christian World View in the Classroom—A Manual*, and *As the Twig is Bent—A Parents Manual*, both authored by Dr. Simonds. These books presented the author’s beliefs

about “secular humanism” in contrast to the author’s definition of Christianity, along with specific plans for organizing parents’ groups to combat humanism in the schools, instructions as to how to deal with school boards, how to write good press releases, how to get Christians on school boards, and how to get involved in politics in the interest of eliminating secular humanism from the classroom. The National Association of Christian Educators described itself as “A national organization of Christian educators in the public schools – stands for excellence in academics; Judeo-Christian morals and values in public schools; removal of secular humanism to be replaced with Character Education curriculum.” (Robert Simonds, *As the Twig is Bent*, NACE, CA 1983, p.11)

Also in 1983, an attorney in Washington, Michael Farris, together with California Attorney Mike Smith, whom he had met at a homeschooling conference, began an organization called Home School Legal Defense Association out of his home in Olympia. Prior to Mr. Smith’s involvement with HSLDA, Smith had already been representing California homeschooling families, mostly by “writing letters and making phone calls.”

www.hslda.org/hslda/history/timeline.html

According to Mr. Farris, his first actual case was a case he filed against the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington on behalf of six homeschooling families which he considered to be a constitutional challenge of Washington state law, a test case. Meanwhile, a coalition of homeschooling families in Washington had been working with legislators for some time on favorable homeschooling legislation, which passed while Mr. Farris’s case was still pending. Mr. Farris also represented parents in Eastern Washington in their efforts to have the book, *The Learning Tree*, removed from the classroom.

According to the HSLDA timeline for 1983:

“May 18 — Washington: Because they were being denied the right to educate their children, home schoolers, led by HSLDA, challenged the constitutionality of the Washington statute when they filed the *Caproni* case. This contributed to the passage of a new home school law...”

www.hslda.org/hslda/history/timeline.html

In 1983, *Teaching Home Magazine – The Christian Magazine for Home Educators*, began publishing, and reported the *Caproni* case as follows:

“This summer, the Homeschool Legal Defense Association’s ... major legal activity in Washington has been the *Caproni v. Brouillett* case in Olympia...The *Caproni* case is unusual, because families — not the state — brought the suit...The *Caproni* families and the HSLDA hope that the court will declare the present state laws unconstitutional and ask the legislature to rewrite the law so it protects the constitutional rights of homeschoolers.”(2)

These excerpts highlight the differing philosophies among homeschoolers. In Washington, as in other states, there were some homeschoolers who preferred not to have homeschooling legislation enacted but who wanted to stand on their constitutional rights, while other homeschoolers, often homeschoolers who had run afoul of the local school district, as I did, were anxious to see favorable legislation enacted so that the harassment would come to an end.

According to Mr. Farris, at the end of 1983, HSLDA had approximately 200 member families which heard of HSLDA by way of homeschooling conferences in Dallas, Sacramento, and Portland. States Farris:

“I frankly thought that the organization was going to take off. I thought HSLDA would get to be an organization of about 10,000 people the first year, year and a half, because I thought all the home schoolers would join. Instead, we had slow growth rather than rapid growth. The reality was that if the organization had grown as rapidly as I thought it was going to grow, I would never have left Washington state. Because it failed to grow rapidly, we moved to Virginia so that I could work with Concerned Women for America and have a paying job. But I am absolutely confident that that was a way for us to get direction. I am confident that’s where we’re supposed to be and that would not have happened if we’d had the initial rapid growth that I anticipated.”

(HSLDA www.hslda.org/hslda/history/good-bad-inspiring.html)

In 1983, Gregg Harris began his Christian Life Workshops ministry and presented national seminars to homeschooling families on the subject of homeschooling. Prior to beginning CLW, Harris had worked with Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore.

In 1983, *Home Education Magazine* began to be published by Mark and Helen Hegener, homeschooling parents of five children. Helen Hegener had, herself, been homeschooled, and HEM was and is an inclusive publication, with people of many faiths on its staff, including conservative Christians, and with a diverse readership which includes, again, people from every conceivable background and faith community.

1984

In 1984, the Advanced Training Institute of America was founded by Bill Gothard. HSLDA attorney Jim Carden was instrumental in introducing the concept of home schooling to Bill Gothard and was among the 100 families who piloted the ATIA program. In this same year, Attorney Jordan Lorange joined the staff of HSLDA in Virginia. According to an article published in a 1984 issue of *Teaching Home Magazine*, Lorange and Farris met in 1982 “at a retreat for legislators held by Bill Gothard in the upper Peninsula of Michigan.” (Ron Hainline, “Meet the HSLDA’s Washington, D.C., Staff,” *Teaching Home Magazine*, 1984.)

Bill Gothard had begun a national conservative Christian ministry in the 60s in which he traveled the country presenting his “Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts” seminar to Christians in major cities during a turbulent time when many parents were worried about their teenage children. Not much is known to the general public about this program, because Gothard’s materials have largely been available only to those who attend his conferences. He does not allow taping or videotaping of his seminars, which occur over a week’s time, several hours each evening, and all day Saturday, and in general, he does not agree to interviews. Mr. Gothard was able to spread the word about homeschooling and his new program to families who had attended his conferences, a considerable number of

Quotes from the Fathers of Homeschooling

The best learning community I have ever known, in which most people were growing most rapidly in competence, skill and judgment, was not meant to be a learning community at all. It was a U.S. submarine – the USS Barbero – in World War II. We were not in that sub to “learn about submarines” but to help fight the war. We never thought about learning. We were too busy running that complicated ship and trying to find and sink enemy ships and trying to keep them from finding and sinking us to have time to worry about learning.

“Our present great concern about learning, and all the time, talk and money we spend on it, seems to me to be a sign – one of many – that something is very wrong with modern society – all modern societies. If most people had work to do that they liked, that used and rewarded much of their intelligence, skill and judgment, work whose purposes they understood and shared and respected, and if they felt that what they thought, believed, wanted, said and did made or might make a real difference, we would not be talking so much about learning. We would all be busy doing interesting things that mattered.”

—John Holt, “Imagining the Future—The Learning Society”, *Christian Science Monitor*, April 8, 1974

people. By 1992, according to his seminar brochure, 2,300,000 people had attended the course in "Basic Youth Conflicts."

1985

Raymond and Dorothy Moore began publishing the *Parent Educator and Family Report* and continued their work on behalf of homeschooling families by providing curriculum and counseling and advocating on their behalf in courts, legislative bodies, and on radio and television.

Dr. Raymond Moore met with U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett this year in the Secretary's Washington, D.C. headquarters at Dr. Bennett's request to discuss homeschooling

(Parent Educator and Family Report, May/June 1985)

Mary Pride published *The Way Home*.

1986

In these years, there was great cooperation among homeschoolers, and homeschooling leaders from all backgrounds joined together to present conferences to homeschoolers and families interested in homeschooling. They supported one another, advertised for one another, made important announcements on one another's behalf. They formed support groups across denominational lines and worked willingly together.

Consider the following conference announcement, which long-time homeschoolers will agree would be unusual to see today: "Hewitt Research Foundation [the Moores' organization at the time] announced the Princeton, New Jersey leadership conference at the Hyatt Hotel. National and state leaders attending included the Moores, John Eidsmoe, Michael Farris, Donna Richoux, of Holt Associations (*Growing Without Schooling*), and Phyllis Shlafly." *(Vol. 4, No. 1, The Parent Educator and Family Report, "Bulletin")*

In this same issue:

"In the early years of the home education movement Raymond and Dorothy Moore, though not lawyers, spent a large share of their time interceding with school officials in behalf of hundreds of parents and their right

to choose the education of their children. If the threats or harassment could be dealt with before problems became serious, most confrontations could be avoided. . . Now, however, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) has formulated a plan of insurance protection for home schools and assembled a network of qualified attorneys to intercede for families in case of threats and handle the case if it becomes necessary...the Moores are grateful for the relief this has brought to their work loads."

From "Legal Matters," Vol. 4, No. 2, The Parent Educator and Family Report

Nevertheless, judging from other information which began to appear in newsletters, storm clouds were on the horizon and all was not completely well. From the cover article of the March/April 1986 issue of *The Parent Educator and Family Report*:

"Here at Hewitt, our personal testimony regardless of church affiliation is that we believe deeply in the grace and righteousness by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But with great caution, deep thought and love we re-emphasize that our calling is to all people regardless of race, color, creed or national origin. And it is our fondest wish that state organizations function in this manner. Indeed, we believe that those who are not tolerant of others' beliefs, who set up guidelines to exclude them or who work for freedom only for those who are religious not only drive them from Christ but become warped and rigid in their own bigotry and turn away Christ from their own lives. The Savior did not and does not operate in that way..."

"Why should we emphasize separatism and division when there is currently a genuine effort on the part of non-Christian home educators to work with Christians and vice versa? ...We in no way suggest that home schooling families refrain from association with others of like values—in support groups or at any level. But we must not encourage our state groups to be exclusive any more than we would restrict the state house or the Congress. To suggest that we try to divide homeschoolers state wide is to make it difficult to get good parent-protection laws in our state legislatures and good decisions in our courts..."

"Divide and conquer is what you do to the enemy, not to your own! These are our brothers and sisters in home schooling...And some of them are much more Christlike, and radically conservative in their dealings with others than some of us Christians..."

Vol. 4, No. 2, The Parent Educator and Family Report

Reviewing a dissertation written by Mike Shepherd entitled, "*The Home Schooling Movement: An Emerging Conflict in American Education*," Brian Ray, now of HSLDA-affiliated NHERI (National Home Education Research Institute) wrote:

"In Chapter 2, the author engages in theorizing about why and how home education has recently experienced a resurgence. During the '60s and '70s, the New Left desired more individual freedom and delved deeply into experimenting with alternative schools... It was natural for alternative schools to accommodate home schooling as one more alternative approach to education...While many alternative school people and secular homeschoolers seek greater freedom for students, "...many of the overtly religious parents who instruct their own children do not relish the child's freedom to explore ideas on his own. Rather, they are more interested in indoctrinating their sons and daughters in truths already known, namely, the truths of the Bible..."

—From *The Home Schooling Movement: An Emerging Conflict in American Education*, cited by Brian Ray, "Research Report: A Study of the Homeschooling Movement," *The Teaching Home*, Oct./Nov. 1986, p. 24

Another significant event of 1986 was the announcement, which appeared in national newspapers and magazines all over the United States, that the first of David and Micki Colfax's four sons had aced the College Boards and gone on to attend Harvard after having been unschooled all of his life and growing up on the family's homestead, for many of his growing up years living without electricity or running water. Two more of the Colfaxes sons, one a birth son, one adopted, similarly went on to ace the college boards and enter Ivy League schools. The Colfaxes wrote of their experiences in two books popular with homeschoolers, *Homeschooling for Excellence* and *Trouble in Paradise* and began speaking at homeschooling conferences to enraptured audiences

thrilled to have confirmed that what they had long suspected was true: homeschooling could provide the best possible education for one's children.

John Holt died of cancer, to the sorrow of thousands of homeschoolers who dearly loved him. Leadership of *Growing Without Schooling* was assumed by Pat Farenga and others, who continue Holt's work today.

1987

During this time, a controversy developed between curriculum suppliers who advocated for early structured teaching – for children as young as 3 years old – and the Moores, who had long advocated for delaying structured teaching until a child was eight years of age or older. Some homeschoolers began describing or referring to the Moores' better-late-than-early educational philosophy as “unbiblical” and “humanistic.”

Responding to these criticisms, in the May/June 1987, *Family Report*, Raymond Moore said:

“Unfortunately, many homeschoolers have not studied the research and still worse, there are some Christians who seem to believe that if someone they call a humanist says something, it must be wrong. Many researchers who have found truth in education are not Christians. Yet that does not deny the validity of their findings...Neither do all 'humanists' agree. One of the current programs in this country, promoted by a 'humanist' is one in which mothers are encouraged to use flash cards with math facts and words to teach their babies as early as 18 months!...

“Readiness for academics does not depend on brilliance, but rather has to do with the integrated physical, mental, emotional and social maturity of the child...”

The controversy over homeschooling styles continued to create dissension between those who advocated for delayed formal teaching or unschooling, (the Moores and John Holt), and those who advocated for early structured teaching, including many conservative Christian homeschoolers, leaders, and curriculum suppliers. In response to allega-

tions that he was putting “research ahead of the Bible,” Dr. Moore responded:

“Any who have read our books carefully or listened closely know that we link science and the Bible. ...Yet we hope to help all people see the importance of home education, whether or not they have Biblical evidence and many of them have become Christians through a better understanding of the family relationships.

“Modern research clearly vindicates the Scriptures...We got our ideas from the Bible, first and from our experience, second. We tested it against history, research and common sense and it comes out shining...we have to be careful that we don't misuse the Bible as many do while ignoring research...”

One major curriculum supplier, criticizing the Moores' and others' research, said, “We find no substantiation for the theory that early reading or structured education causes myopia or any other physical or psychological problems, such as “burnout”, frustration, delinquency or misbehavior. These problems are often a result of the methods used to teach young children, or the lack of proper child training, not the age at which they were taught,”

Dr. Moore responded:

“First, we believe that early childhood education is Biblically correct, but not as defined by this firm. Second, we are astonished at the statement respecting myopia and other child problems. The Bible is dear to us and utterly scientific; it in no way counters sound research. In our opinion these precious people, no matter how sincere, are either uninformed or have turned away from research which is so conclusive that there is not a single replicable study to oppose it. We have been trying to help these folk but now realize that their program is dangerous and a sure road to burnout and family and child problems. They would try to make a tadpole hop before his legs were grown. Or make a rose bloom by peeling down the petals, thus bruising and hurting its natural bloom. Read the research in our books *School Can Wait* and *Better Late Than Early*. Child specialists no

longer confront us on these conclusions. Our new book on burnout, due in October, addresses this.”

(July/August 1988 *Family Report*, p. 5.)

By 1987, according to Attorney Mike Smith, when he joined Mr. Farris in Virginia, HSLDA had 3,600 members, 30-40 percent of them from his home state, California.

(HSLDA www.hslda.org/hslda/history/good-bad-inspiring.html)

1988

The release of Dr. Moore's new book, *Home School Burnout*, caused a furor amongst some homeschooling leaders during this year, and there was a spate of essays and editorials in homeschooling publications refuting Moore's assertions that homeschoolers can and do burn out, especially when they use rigid curriculum and a school-at-home approach. Dr. Moore also, for the first time, published his thoughts about the emerging exclusiveness in some conservative Christian homeschooling circles and his concern that this might be damaging to the movement as a whole.

The *Teaching Home* announced National Home School Convention '88, including a National Leadership Conference, which was held in Portland Oregon during this year. Keynote Speakers were Jonathon Lindvall, Gregg Harris, and Michael Farris. Also speaking were Dr. Ruth Beechick, Virginia Baker, Cathy Duffy, Richard Wheeler, Richard Fugate, Harold Wengert, Phil Myers, Ray E. Ballman, Susan Beatty, James Rose. This may have been the first national convention featuring conservative Christian speakers only.

In general, movement in the direction of a divided homeschooling movement increased during this time, with some homeschooling leaders urging that support groups require members or leaders of homeschooling support groups to sign statements of faith. Christian homeschoolers were themselves deeply divided; some wanted exclusively Christian support groups and others did not. The feelings of those who supported exclusivity are summed up in this quote:

“Maintaining a Christian support group requires maintaining leadership. To many of us it is one of the

most important issues. A group open to unbelievers and the resultant open leadership is the alternate choice.

“A brief and concise statement of purpose and statement of faith is a way to insure the perpetuation of a Christian group. If this can be agreed upon by the charter members, it will point the way for future decisions and provide peace of mind when those values are questioned. A second consideration is requesting that the leadership or those taking responsibilities agree or subscribe to these statements. Lastly, make these tenets known to the members. Let them know where the foundation of the group lies and by doing so allow any of them who cannot abide by them to excuse themselves.”

—Dick and Dorothy Karman, “Making It Work – Good Advice from a Veteran Support Group Leader, April/May 1988, *The Teaching Home*, p. 35

1989

Mary Pride began publishing her newsletter, *HELP for Growing Families*.

I began publishing *Gentle Spirit Magazine*.

The movement in the direction of greater control and regulation within exclusive homeschool support groups continued to increase, as demonstrated by the following quote:

“Children’s dress and conduct on support group field trips should be similar to that at a “church function.” Children or parents who are disruptive, or who degrade the Christian witness of the field trip or activity may be asked to leave by the organizer.”

— Dick and Dorothy Karman, “Field Trip Guidelines”, *The Teaching Home*, Feb/Mar 1989, p. 13

1990

The National Center for Home Education, NCHE, was created by HSLDA’s Board of Directors in 1990 as a ministry to state leaders. Its interests included legislative actions relative to home schooling, educational issues in general and parenting concerns from a conservative Christian fundamentalist viewpoint.

www.hslda.org/hslda/history/timeline.html

Responding to an interviewer’s question about the homeschooling laws at this time as follows:

When did you begin to sense that the fear [if repercussions from homeschooling] was alleviated? Was it a gradual process or was there a definite break point?

Chris Klicka, HSLDA attorney, responded:

“Well, from ’85 on, we saw a pretty steady gain in the legislatures. Up until 1990, three to four states per year were changing their laws. By 1990, people were feeling pretty confident. There were only a very few states that were giving us problems as far as the very right to exist. I’d say about 1990 it shifted. Now the issue is how far can they regulate us, rather than do we have the right to exist. Then the DeJonge case probably put to rest the last really bitter attack on home schooling in any state. And we’ve had so many victories in the courts and legislatures, it’s phenomenal. The fear has gone away and confidence has set in.”

In this same year, *the National Center for Home Education* began operation, and NCHE’s first Regional Support Group Leaders’ Symposium was held in Syracuse, New York.▼

(Part 2 will appear in next month’s Gentle Spirit.)

“Here at Hewitt, our personal testimony regardless of church affiliation is that we believe deeply in the grace and righteousness by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But with great caution, deep thought and love we re-emphasize that our calling is to all people regardless of race, color, creed or national origin...”

—Dr. Raymond Moore