

Chapter 2

The Gift of the Land

It is awesome to see God take over a man's life, give him a vision, and then in "the fullness of time" bring about something even greater than the original vision. Surely the ways of God give cause for the praise of his people! That essentially describes how Cedar Campus came to be. The man with the vision, with the open heart to God, was Herbert J. Taylor.

Herbert Taylor was born in 1893 to fervently Christian parents in the small town of Pickford in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, a few miles south of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. He liked to say that Cedar Campus began when he went forward at a revival meeting in the Pickford Methodist Church when he was sixteen years old and accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

His father, one of the early pioneers who settled in that farming community, was an early entrepreneur in the eastern Upper Peninsula. He was active in lumber, the local bank and the telephone company. His brothers ran the local dry good store, the grocery, the hardware and the shoe stores. To dream big and take risks is part of the Taylor heritage. Herbert Taylor first saw Prentiss Bay when he went to look at a piece of land his father had recently purchased on the north shore of Prentiss

Bay, six miles east of Cedarville, Michigan. Taylor later told students, "It looked as beautiful to me then as it does now. I have always loved this north country with its blue water and fresh evergreen forests." He commented to his father that this site would make a great place for a camp for young people. Already a youthful Herbert Taylor was thinking ahead.



▲ Herbert J. Taylor, a great-hearted visionary, is responsible for gathering the land comprising Cedar Campus, piece by piece, over the course of sixteen years.

After graduating from Northwestern University in 1917, Taylor took a job with the YMCA in France. During World War I the U.S. Navy assigned him to the Quartermaster Corp in Brest, France. When the war ended Taylor stayed on with the YMCA, helping to process separation-from-service for the armed forces. Herbert liked working with young people. This job pleased him because there was also a spiritual dimension to it. The YMCA offered him a permanent job in New York. He also received a job offer from Sinclair Oil Company. What should he do in his postwar plans?

He talked over his options with his friend George Perkins whom he had met in France. Perkins knew of Taylor's interest in Christian service, but he also knew that Taylor had keen business sense. He suggested that Herbert use his skills in business to make money so that he could give generously and

eventually free himself to be more fully involved in Christian work. Taylor took Perkin's advice. He took the job with Sinclair Oil and moved to Oklahoma, but not before marrying his sweetheart Gloria Forbrich.

A year later the first oil was discovered in the country. Taylor resigned from Sinclair and opened an insurance and real estate business specializing in oil field leases. Already his successful business life provided not only a generous income, but gave him freedom to give time to civic and church activities. However, his wife Gloria frequently reminded him of his promise—that after a few years in Oklahoma he would move the family back to the Chicago area. In 1924 he kept that promise and moved his family, which by then included two daughters—Beverly and Ramona—back to Illinois. He took a position with the Jewel Tea Company and by 1930 he was the executive vice president of Jewel Tea Company, in line to become president.

The Depression changes Taylor's direction

In 1932 the Club Aluminum Company in Chicago was on the verge of bankruptcy. Taylor was seconded at the request of the Continental National Bank of Chicago to provide top-level executive skills to get Club Aluminum out of trouble. After settling some lawsuits against the company, Taylor concluded that Club Aluminum was still in trouble with \$400,000 of debts, for which a Depression economy would provide little relief. To declare bankruptcy would mean loss of jobs for two hundred fifty employees. After prayer and discussion with his wife Gloria he made a risky decision. He borrowed from his Jewel Tea Company stock options and purchased Club Aluminum Company.

He asked God to help him set up policies that would reflect God's standards for ethics in business. He wanted a concise, easily remembered guide to right conduct, a kind



▲ Northshore Lodge, designed by a member of Mr. Taylor's Sunday school class, was used by his class and by Christian Service Brigade in the 1930s and early 40s.



▲ Point of Pines was built and used by the Harold Taylor family, and later purchased by Herbert Taylor as part of the north shore site.

of ethical yardstick that all company members could memorize. One day at his desk, praying with his head on his hands, he felt God answer. He sat up and wrote down twenty-four words that became the famous Four-Way Test for ethical action.

Is it the truth?
 Is it fair to all concerned?
 Will it build good will and better friendships?
 Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

He applied the new test to all company policies and to the company's misleading advertising. Where company policy failed the test, he made necessary changes. He discouraged salesmen from selling dealers more merchandise than they could profitably sell, and used the test to resolve vendor disputes and make sure that all creditors were paid in full. He introduced the Four-Way Test into the Rotary Club of Chicago, and later when he became president of Rotary International, the Four-Way Test was promoted worldwide.*

* A bronze statue of Herbert J. Taylor was erected in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on the corner of Ashman and Spruce by the Rotary Club in 2003. The Four-Way Test is displayed on the statue.

Renewing a vision for Prentiss Bay

Herbert Taylor purposed, as God prospered him, to set aside 25% of company stock. In 1940 he formed The Christian Workers Foundation to help further Christian ministry to young people. During the Depression, he used a storefront mission in Chicago to provide a soup kitchen for the unemployed and help indigent families. He became active in his church, in the Boy Scouts, and Hi-Y. He taught a Sunday School class of boys at the Methodist Church in Park Ridge, Illinois. He decided to take the fifteen boys from his class for a week of camping on the land his father had purchased on the north shore of Prentiss Bay. The boys fell in love with the place and wanted to return the next summer. One of the boys, Jack Scott, was taking mechanical drawing and he came up with a plan for a lodge (Northshore.) Later the Christian Service Brigade used the site and added two cabins in the woods, one of which still stands as Huckaby Cabin.

Taylor's brother Harold, who took over the father's lumber business, owned a small simple cabin on a point of land on the far side of Prentiss Creek where he and his family sometimes camped in the summers. Herbert Taylor bought that cabin (now called Point of Pines) and added it to the Prentiss Bay acreage. The accumulation of land for what is now Cedar Campus was underway. The piece along the bay just to the south of the north shore was owned by the State of Michigan. The state does not sell its land; it only trades for a more desired piece. Taylor bought a piece along what is now M-134 for the state in exchange for the property he wanted, a property that includes what we now call Sandy Cove.

A widening Christian ministry

As the company prospered, Taylor freed up

time to increase his involvement in Christian work. Between 1940 and 1950 he helped three organizations get started: Child Evangelism, Christian Service Brigade (a church-related Boy Scout movement), and the Pioneer Girls Clubs (now called Pioneer Clubs). He provided venture capital to pioneer the Young Life program, an idea that began with a Dallas seminary student's concern for high school students. Over the years Taylor's foundation provided land for camping facilities for each of these movements.

Sometime in the late 1930s Taylor heard of the InterVarsity movement of Canada and the work of C. Stacey Woods. He felt a growing urgency to reach university students. He visited the InterVarsity work at the U. of Toronto and decided he wanted to woo Woods to begin promoting student witness in the universities of the United States. This ability to ferret out people with leadership abilities seemed a gift that both Taylor and Woods possessed.

Stacey Woods and Charles Troutman, his cohort from his Wheaton College days, began making forays into the universities in the States. Taylor, through the Christian Worker's Foundation, offered free office space and full staff support for one year as an incentive to begin the work. The arrangement was half support the second year, a quarter support the third year to give time for the staff to build up a support base. It came to pass as Taylor had planned, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship was incorporated in 1940 in the United States.

The acquisition of the camp site

Taylor began to work in earnest to acquire land around Prentiss Bay for a campsite for training university students. The land that had once been the town of Prentiss was tied up in the Hyde estate with nine heirs scat-

tered across the country. This proved a blessing because it kept the land around Prentiss Bay undeveloped. Every other peninsula and bay was crowded with tourist cottages and homes. Taylor set a fair value for the Hyde land and put Ken Hanson to work traveling the country to visit the Hyde heirs to convince them to agree to sell. It took six years to get seven of them to sign. Two maiden Hyde sisters, living in Cheboygan, Michigan, held out. They had built two rustic log cabins on the property. Part of their summer adventure was to cross the straits on the ferry and travel through the woods to camp at Prentiss Bay. They did not want to sell.

After some time had passed, a frustrated Herbert Taylor decided he would go himself to present his case to these two Hyde sisters. He found them sitting on the porch of their Cheboygan home; he introduced himself and made his pitch for two hours. He was not buying this land for commercial gain for himself, he said. He was buying it to give it away for the training of students who would help further the kingdom of God. He was persuasive; he went over the details again. The price offered was more than fair.

The Hyde sisters rocked silently in their chairs, not looking at all interested. Finally, thinking he had failed, Taylor silently prayed James 1:5, saying, "Lord, if you want us to have Prentiss Bay for the coming generations, please give me wisdom right now." Then he rose to leave, thanking them for listening. As he left the porch, he turned and surprised himself by his own words. He tipped his hat and said, "Ladies, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes on the day of judgment."

Before he reached his car, the sisters called out, "Mr. Taylor, come back and talk to us." He did, and they signed off their part of the land that day. Taylor now had the Old Mill

Point area and Whitefish Point. Other transactions needed to take place to get a clear deed to the six miles of shoreline that comprises the camp today. In all, it took sixteen years to finalize the purchase of the land that he would later give to InterVarsity. Not many people are as purposeful in following their vision as Herbert Taylor.

The gift receives a cool reception

When Taylor offered this campsite to InterVarsity he got little response. IVCF was operating Campus-in-the-Woods, a training center situated on an island one hundred fifty miles north of Toronto in Canada. All students in the U.S. were trained there and it had an emotional draw. The Prentiss Bay



▲ Huckaby Cabin, named after a volunteer from the early Chicago high school camps. It was one of two cabins back in the woods that comprised the original camping site. The second was named Parkhurst.

property seemed too much of a wilderness. Campers would have to cross the ferry and drive through heavy forests to find the place. It was so undeveloped!

Everyone was dubious about this new campsite, except Cleo W. Buxton—known as Buck—InterVarsity Regional Secretary for the Midwest states. He saw possibilities

for using this site to train students in his region. Hardship did not scare him off. He had served as an infantry officer in the Italian theater of World War II.* He believed in training young male students and staff to endure “hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!” In 1950 after a session at Campus-in-the-Woods he headed for Prentiss Bay in his station wagon with five students and one staff worker (Paul Hanselman). His goal was to have these six men prepare this overgrown, long unused campsite for a ten-day camp for Michigan students by late August. (It was likely Buck who decided this campsite should be called Cedar Campus.)

Buck opened an account in a Cedarville grocery store and assigned Hanselman, who had never cooked, the task of making up the menus. After discussing the work that needed to be done, Buck took off for appointments in Chicago, leaving the six men without a car. When they asked how they could get supplies if he took the car, Buck replied that they would figure out a way. They did; they hitchhiked to Cedarville for groceries, and made the rule that anyone who complained about the food would have to make the next meal. Just when they were most discouraged about their lack of progress, Don Vinkemulder, a student at Michigan State U. who lived in nearby Rudyard, arrived on site to check out what was happening. He had a car, the know-how for the job, and access to tools to help move the project along. Later the arrival of Don DeGraaf and his wife Mae, from the U. of Michigan IV chapter, brought further encouragement.**

Buck returned two days before the camp

*Buxton later pioneered the Officers Christian Fellowship in the U.S., an IVCF-type work among the military, and also a worldwide movement that operates much like the InterVarsity IFES.

**Paul Carlson (a student who came with Buck), Don Vinkemulder, and the DeGraafs all have participated over the years in Cedar Campus ministry.

began. They still had no beds. Bales of straw from a local farmer, spread on the floor of the two dormitories, became bedding for the forty-five student campers. He also secured a cook—Fredda Kyro, an Upper Peninsula Finn—who took the poorly equipped kitchen in her stride. Dr. Bob Smith, one of InterVarsity’s favorite speakers, was the camp speaker, bunking with his family in the cabin now called Point of Pines. Under Buxton’s leadership it had become a grand adventure with no complaints, a time of significant spiritual gain. This was InterVarsity’s first use of the site.

In the summer of 1951 Campus-in-the-Woods had more students registered for its four-week leadership training session than the camp could accommodate. Hearing of Buxton’s successful use of Cedar Campus, the decision was made to use this site as an “overflow camp.” It was billed that way. Strictly second choice. This time Michigan staff worker, Paul Hanselman (with Don Vinkemulder and John Avery as helpers) was given only a couple of weeks to ready the place for a four-week leadership training session. Paul replaced the straw with angle-iron bunk beds and the team did whatever else could be done on such short notice, and with little money, to make a livable campsite. Fifty-five campers arrived, and gave the site a new name: “Rumpus in the Stumps.” It rained a lot; the giant mosquitoes threatened to carry them away. Bats interrupted the campers’ sleep; the weather was cold and so was the water. And when

the camp secretary opened the desk drawer, a mouse jumped out!

The senior InterVarsity staff leading the camp later gave a negative report to the InterVarsity Board. Although the session had been an unusually profitable time spiritually, they concluded that the Prentiss Bay property was not an adequate site for a camp.



▲ Overflow Leadership Training Camp, 1951. Charles Troutman (center), InterVarsity Associate General Director, led this camp. Here he arranges the group for Sunday morning worship in front of Northshore Lodge.

One of the speakers at that overflow camp was Northcote Deck, a venerable missionary doctor to the Solomon Islands. Early each morning, regardless of the weather, the elderly Dr. Deck waded out into Prentiss Creek and proceeded to swim out to Old Mill Point, often disappearing into the early morning fog. He loved the place. He later sought out Herbert Taylor, who was discouraged by the staff report, and asked him not to give the site to anyone else. He said to wait, because InterVarsity staff would come around to wanting it. All lovers of the present Cedar

Campus can thank Dr. Deck for these words of wisdom when they see him in heaven!

Two years passed before Stacey Woods asked Ralph Willoughby, a former member of the IV chapter at the U. of Michigan and now finishing theological studies at Fuller Seminary, if he would consider developing the 500 acres of land that Mr. Taylor was offering to InterVarsity. Willoughby was slated to return to IV staff in September of 1953 after spending the summer as a counselor at Pioneer Boys' Camp in Canada. In August Willoughby contracted a rare form of polio and died within four days at age 28. It was an event that shook the Fellowship.

Keith Hunt accepts responsibility to develop the land

The next April Stacey asked Keith Hunt to visit the Prentiss Bay site and take his wife along. Stacey was wise enough to know it

was too big a task for one person; it wouldn't work unless a couple made it a team project. At the time Keith was staffing thirty-five campuses for InterVarsity in a three-state area—Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. In addition to his other assignments, would Keith consider taking responsibility for developing this 500-acre site? We agreed to take a look. Cleo Buxton and his wife agreed to be our guides for this investigative trip, since Buxton was familiar with the terrain from his time there in 1950.

It had been a hard winter; the snow was deep and the bay was still frozen over, but it was incredibly beautiful. We looked over the cabins in the Northshore area, and as the four of us hiked across the bay toward the point, it was obvious that any new camp development should be on this piece of land jutting out into the bay. Three white-tailed deer watched from the mounded snow by the old sawmill chimney, and as we neared they fluffed their tails and took off. We walked along the rocky shore to what is now Sandy Cove, where the water swelled to make music of the tinkling shimmers of ice. Who would not be smitten by the beauty, by the spaciousness, by the horizon on the lake! We began to talk about what this could mean in giving students an opportunity to meet God in deeper ways.

Tromping the site in deep snow, losing our way and getting caught in a swamp as we tried to find our way back to our car on M-134—it was not an exploration for the weak-hearted. God must have captured our hearts with this place because on the way back to the car we said to each other, "Let's do it!" We didn't know what we were getting into, but somehow Mr. Taylor's vision became ours and God even expanded it. With Keith's acceptance of the task, Mr. Taylor prepared to deed the land to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

SUPERIOR VIEW PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION



▲ Getting to Cedar Campus in the early 1950s often involved long waits for the ferry that crossed the Straits of Mackinac.



▲ In 1954 news of the proposed Mackinac Bridge came as personal confirmation to the Hunts in their commitment to develop Cedar Campus. When finished (1957), the bridge would make the camp much more accessible.

Addendum: Herbert Taylor lived by his Four-Way Test. He was our mentor and greatest encourager. His enthusiasm for Cedar Campus never waned, and his counsel was readily available. On his visits to camp he challenged students to memorize the Scripture, and spoke of his own practice of reciting the Sermon on the Mount every day as he drove to work.

This history will mention Taylor's input again and again. Generations of students could rise up and call him blessed for his faithfulness to the Lord. A lesser man would have given up the vision; he persevered. In 1975 he suffered a stroke that severely impaired his ability to speak, read and write. He died in 1978 at the age of 85, a faithful and loved man of God. At his memorial service the tribute was given: "Over the past forty years few men have made a greater impact on the Christian culture and evangelical renewal than Herbert J. Taylor. Though he was not known as a preacher, an educator, a philosopher, or a politician, he was in a way a combination of them all. Preeminently, he was a dedicated Christian layman who served his Lord by giving himself quietly to develop leaders and organizations which now have a worldwide impact."



▲ Portrait of Herbert Taylor, alongside the Four-Way Test.

"None of you will get the thrill out of being up here that I get, yet I only get to be here a couple of days a year. The Lord has blessed Cedar Campus beyond whatever I had prayed or hoped for. The real dividend of our investment is what happens to the lives of those who come here—seeing them grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and then going out to witness for him on the campus and to the ends of earth. My prayer is that each of you personally will come to love the Word of God."

Herbert J. Taylor, speaking to a student camp, 1962