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PRAGMATIC EVANGELICAL: HERBERT TAYLOR, 1893–1978

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One of the more neglected parties in historical accounts of significant religious movements and organizations in the 20th century are the individuals who provided the financial resources for these phenomena to occur. The silent partners of successful evangelists and preachers as a rule are not elderly women donating their widow's mites every month, but rather wealthy business leaders and professionals whose sizable contributions and personal friendships with church leaders combined to exert an incredible influence on religious activity. Virtually, no prominent preacher or religious institution is without a benefactor or two; in most cases, the relationship between them rests squarely on a harmony of goals, visions and values. Together, the person of wealth and the person of the cloth get the religious job done.

One religiously-motivated businessman who was known for "getting things done" was Herbert J. Taylor, President of the Chicago-based Club Aluminum Products and a lifelong Methodist layperson. By funneling the profits of his cookware business into his Christian Workers Foundation for the purpose of financing evangelistic youth organizations, Taylor assumed a pivotal role in the post-World War II resurgence of conservative evangelicalism. His story graphically illustrates the dynamic interaction of capitalist values and religious zeal that has characterized the American Protestant milieu. It also helps to explain how the leading fundamentalists of the 1940s and 1950s broke out of the narrow confines of their immediate past and became as capable of dealing with modernity as their liberal counterparts.

Herbert Taylor was born in 1893 in the small northern Michigan town of Pickford, a village of some 300 people located in the lumbering territory of the Upper Peninsula. Because the Taylor clan owned many of the businesses in Pickford, the young Taylor was able to gain both a high school degree in nearby Sault Ste. Marie and a college education at Northwestern University. After graduating in 1917, he travelled to France as a YMCA worker where he helped distribute food and clothing. Taylor joined the Navy when the United States entered the war but remained in France in an administrative post.

While in France, Taylor met George Perkins, then a YMCA executive and later J. Peirpont Morgan's right-hand man. Taylor credited Perkins with helping him define his mission in life:

> Mr. Perkins was the vehicle through which I'm certain God presented me with a plan—His particular plan for me. No man could have predicted my life with

> such accuracy, and surely no one but the Lord could have assured my survival to carry out the plan. Frm the moment I left Mr. Perkins' office, I knew the course of my life. It was one of the most confident and wonderful moments in my life.[1]

The plan was rather simple: become a success in business, using his extra time to work with youth, so that by the age of 45 having become independently wealthy, he could devote himself fully to young people's projects. In almost every way, Taylor's career followed those steps.

He began his business vocation with the Sinclair Oil Company, working in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma, as an assistant manager for a pipeline station then under construction. A year later, he entered the booming oilfield business as a lease broker and began selling insurance. Showing all the instincts for successful salesmanship, Taylor soon emerged as a leading businessman in the community; he spearheaded the Chamber of Commerce's drive for paved roads in the county and was nicknamed "Sign 'Em Up Taylor" because of his aggressive petition campaign.

It was also in Paul's Valley where Taylor first became involved with the Rotary Club, a public service organization begun in Chicago in 1905 with 758 chapters around the world in 1921. Taylor helped to start a club and through it initiated a variety of projects for the benefit of local youth. Like himself, the club was both a "community builder as well as a confidence builder."[2]

After five years in Oklahoma, Taylor and his wife decided to move to Chicago. He accepted a position as office manager with the Jewel Tea Company. Taylor moved rapidly through the company ranks and in 1930, became executive vice-president.

But in 1932, he took a risky step. Asked to help the Chicago-based Club Aluminum Products Company stay out of bankruptcy, Taylor devoted half of his time for almost two years to coping with the firm's $400,000 debt. He then resigned from Jewel to take over Club Aluminum at an annual salary of $6000. "I was confident I was being directed by God," Taylor said later, "so I really didn't have any choice. It was quite apparent that I was the only person convinced that the company could be saved. I was convinced because the Holy Spirit told me so."[3] Within five years, the entire debt was paid off and the company was thriving.

Taylor attributed this turnabout to the implementation of his Four-Way Test, a set of questions that were to guide all decisions company

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[1]Herbert J. Taylor, *God Has A Plan For You* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell, 1968), 23.

[2]Taylor, *Plan*, 33.

[3]Taylor, *Plan*, 39.

executives made (Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?). Taylor recalled that moment of inspiration when the Test came into being.

> I searched through many books for the answer to our need, but the right phrases eluded me, so I did what I often do when I have a problem I can't answer myself: I turn to the One who has all the answers. I leaned over my desk, rested my head in my hands, and prayed. After a few moments, I looked up and reached for a white paper card. Then I wrote down the twenty-four words that had come to me.[4]

The direct application of these questions to the Club Aluminum corporation meant abandoning extravagant advertising claims, making only positive statements about competitors and always giving the client the benefit of the doubt. For the 250 employees of Club Aluminum, the Four-Way Test became a motto to be memorized and implemented as company policy (and privately as well, Taylor hoped).

In fact, the test became a product itself marketed by Rotary International as a creed for goodwill among people of all nations, races and religious faiths. The four questions were packaged on plaques, posters, cards and stickers; businesspeople, politicians and school children all found themselves confronted by the high ethical standards of the test. In later years, Taylor claimed that the Four-Way Test contributed to the reduction of traffic accidents, juvenile delinquency and divorce, while boosting bank earnings and business transactions.

The cookware industry, however, had its own potential for success provided the manufacturer had an eye for clever merchandising techniques. Taylor did, and by 1941 his company was one of the major competitors in the field. He set up Club Aluminum booths in department stores, staffed by primly-dressed home economics experts who dispensed "scientific" advice to the modern housewife. He also began selling pots and pans in grocery stores and took advantage of the new television medium to advertise.[5]

In later years, the company found it difficult to maintain its share of the market. Innovations in metal cookware manufacturing, including the introduction of stainless steel and teflon, changed the industry significantly. Despite their reputation as a firm of outstanding character and high morale, Club Aluminum was dropped from the American Stock Exchange in the 1950s. In the late 1960s, Taylor sold the company to the Standex conglomerate which owned the foundry that manufactured the Club Aluminum utensils.[6]

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[4]Taylor, *Plan,* 41.
[5]William F. McDermott, "Broke in 1933; On Top in 1941," *Rotarian* (March, 1942).
[6]Robert Walker, interview held on October 2, 1986, Wheaton, Illinois.

But Taylor's interests had gravitated to the next stage of his life plan. In 1939, Taylor established a nonprofit foundation using 25 percent of Club Aluminum stock. He, his wife, and his attorney friend, Lysle Smith, functioned as the trustees of the Christian Workers Foundation and distributed the dividends to the organizations and projects that fulfilled their agenda for evangelizing American youth. Within a year, Taylor hired a young journalist from Northwestern University, Robert Walker, to handle the administrative duties for the Foundation and to assist him in launching national youth organizations. Walker, a fellow Methodist who had attended Wheaton College in order to play football and was later converted to the fundamentalist cause, soon found himself editing a Christian magazine for college students, serving on several boards and coordinating the work of these same agencies.

Taylor's goal was to "pioneer and finance the nondenominational organizations we felt would do the best job of reaching young people." In particular, he wanted to establish national agencies for youth at every age level from preshcoolers to collegians. The Foundation's assistance was to be more than monetary. Said Taylor, "we contributed the know-how to assume practical success to organizations guided by men with strong ideals and convictions, who also needed sound business judgment to guarantee the furtherance of their goals. It seems they needed us, and we needed them."[7] To make this contribution, Taylor required that either he or Walker become members of the organization's board of directors if the Foundation was to provide regular funding. At one time, Taylor served on 45 boards.

The first organization to receive Foundation money was Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), a British campus ministry that had migrated to Canada in 1927. Though several Inter-Varsity chapters had formed on American university campuses, the U.S. organization was not established until Taylor persuaded the Canadian board to move its director, Stacey Woods, to Chicago where he would work out of the Foundation offices with an annual budget of $10,000. Woods moved to Chicago in 1941 and travelled extensively establishing chapters on all the major campuses (over 500 by 1950), overseeing a growing staff of full-time campus evangelists and conducting summer training programs for Christian collegians on a 3000-acre tract of land in northern Michigan donated by Taylor. Walker, meanwhile, produced the new Inter-Varsity publication, *His*, which Taylor and Woods launched.[8] In 1948, Taylor brought the student missionary convention, a staple of Canadian IVCF activity, to the University of Illinois campus where

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[7]Taylor, *Plan*, 50.

[8]Herbert J. Taylor to C. Stacey Woods, August 25, 1941. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 60, Folder 24. Billy Graham Center.

1200 students met over the Christmas vacation to be inspired by missionary speakers.

Woods admired Taylor immensely because "he was a man who did more to introduce Christian principles, particularly on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, into his business practice than any man I have known."[9] As chairman of the IVCF board, Taylor worked intimately with Woods, in fact, to such a degree that insiders complained "H.J. Taylor and Stacey Woods rigged everything to suit themselves."[10]

At the same time that Taylor was building the Inter-Varsity ministry, he was attempting to harness the energy of a fireball youth evangelist in Texas named Jim Rayburn who was drawing hordes of teenagers to his after-school clubs and summer tent meetings. In 1940, Rayburn and his fellow seminarians from the ultraconservative Dallas Theological Seminary dubbed their new organization, Young Life Campaign.[11]

Taylor was immediately attracted to Rayburn's approach and agreed to underwrite the enterprise. "Essentially, his whole theory was to go out to unchurched, uninterested young people and attract them to Christ," Taylor recalled, "rather than drive them to Christ. Jim presented the gospel without long sermons. He did it with a fire and enthusiasm that appealed to young people, who might never, in a million years, step inside a church on their own. Jim's 'strange' way of reaching these youngesters of high-school age was just what we needed."[12]

Taylor's only stipulation was that Rayburn extend his work across the country. "You'll have to go national, Rayburn, or I'll not give you another dime."[13] Rayburn was most obliging. By 1967, Young Life clubs reached over 50,000 teenagers nationwide and four ranches owned by the organization attracted 10,000 each summer.

Three other organizations received Taylor's special attention: Child Evangelism Fellowship, Pioneer Girls and Christian Service Brigade. They were organizations dedicated to evangelizing children and young teens who were outside the Protestant church. Each were led by individuals with intense zeal but little organizational savvy. Each were in desperate need of financial support if they were to survive.

Perhaps the one closest to Taylor's heart was Christian Service Brigade. Throughout his adult life, he had done volunteer work with

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[9]C. Stacey Woods, *The Growth of a Work of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), 60.

[10]Quoted in Bruce Shelley, "The Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements" in *Fides et Historia* 18 (January, 1986), 47–63.

[11]See Emile Cailliet's account of this movement in *Young Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

[12]Taylor, *Plan,* 63.

[13]Quoted in Shelley, "Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements."

boys and even became a member of the National Committee on Work with Boys where he interacted with Boy Scout and YMCA officials. The epidemic of juvenile delinquency, as it was perceived in the 1940s with the help of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI propaganda machine worried Taylor who lived on the near north side of Chicago during the Depression and saw children and youth living in poverty.[14] His own personal efforts to alleviate the suffering of his neighbors convinced him that more than bread lines were needed. In his view, it was "a matter of religious training—of guiding young people toward the eternal values of honesty, faith and high principles."[15]

Taylor went on,

> We knew we could strike out at the heart of the major problem facing the country—the lack of spiritual and ethical training for millions of young people. Some of the religious powers took a rather narrow view of the Christian Workers Foundation. In those days, they didn't know who we were and they were suspicious of our desire to help make these organizations nondenominational. But we soon demonstrated the integrity of our efforts and God greatly blessed these projects in His service. Our only concern was the spiritual welfare of young people, and this objective was clearly in evidence from the beginning.[16]

Since most juvenile delinquents were boys, Taylor was especially fond of the young collegians who pioneered the Brigade organization. A closer look at this agency will show how Taylor exerted his influence.

Taylor's first contact with Christian Service Brigade came in 1940 when he decided to help Joe Coughlin, then a Wheaton College student, with the financial burdens of his new boys' organization. Taylor assigned his associate, Walker, to provide managerial leadership of the cluster of Brigade units in the Chicago area. The Christian Workers Foundation also provided Coughlin with an office and the use of Taylor's Prentiss Bay property in northern Michigan for the third summer of Camp Kaskitowa, a primitive adventure camp for teenage boys led by Coughlin.

In 1943, Taylor assumed an even stronger leadership role by becoming chairman of the board of directors and making Walker the General Secretary. The Foundation also began funding the Brigade organization at $400 per month (by the end of the year this was reduced to $225). Always concerned about the national picture, Taylor cultivated relationships with evangelical boys' organizations in Detroit and in New England, eventually bringing about a merger of the three groups. Finally, through Walker's initiative, Taylor brought Kenneth

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[14]For an account of Hoover and the problem of juvenile delinquency, see Richard Gid Powers, *G-Men: Hoover's FBI in American Popular Culture* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983).

[15]Taylor, *Plan,* 61.

[16]Taylor, *Plan,* 62.

Hansen, a young Chicago seminarian, to the Brigade staff as the first full-time General Secretary.

For the next five years, Taylor continued to be a dominant presence on the CSB board. He saw great potential for the Brigade movement and its sister organization, Pioneer Girls, also a product of Wheaton College students. Perhaps his fond memories of boyhood days in Michigan's Upper Peninsula encouraged him to support Coughlin's ambitious camp programs and elaborate ritual which the imaginative collegian injected into the boys' club program.

Of greatest concern to Taylor was the financial viability of Brigade. "The real need was for sound business management and good organization," Taylor said. "God had given me many abilities and experiences in these directions and this instance was but another one where He led me to the right people and the right cause."[17]

From his earliest contacts with Coughlin, Taylor had noted that "it was evident that Joe needed both financial assistance and guidance in managing business affairs."[18] Both he and Walker were clearly impressed with Coughlin's vision and his unique ability to attract boys and they were anxious to translate the excitement of this dynamo into a national movement.

Taylor also pushed Hansen to establish policies for managing and raising funds. For example, he wanted all new staff members to be fully deputized before they began their work. He pressed Hansen and Coughlin to charge an annual registration fee of 25 cents (always the diplomat, Taylor listened patiently to their protests for several years until they relented). Constantly he suggested ways to improve fund-raising appeals and himself made contacts with potential donors.

As a creator of youth organizations, Taylor was always alert to their growth and their cooperation with each other, including merging their operations. On several occasions, he advocated bringing together the Brigade and Pioneer Girls organizations to maximize efficiency in servicing churches. The closest he ever got to this goal was two short-lived appointments of executive secretaries who supervised both organizations simultaneously (Franklin Ellis from 1947 to 1949, and Joseph Bubar from 1967 to 1969).

When Taylor stepped down as board chairman in 1948, the Brigade organization was on its feet, though wobbly at times. Close to 300 churches were using the Brigade program in 24 states involving over 5000 boys. Nine Brigade camps were in operation and a full range of boys' and leaders' literature was available. New staff members had

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[17]Taylor, *Plan,* 66.

[18]Taylor, *Plan,* 66. See also Joseph W. Coughlin, *Boys for Christ* (Wheaton: Christian Service Brigade, 1942); Coughlin, "Professional Leadership Education for Christian Boys' Work" (M.A. thesis, Wheaton College, 1960).

expanded the work and given the Brigade staff a new look: Werner Graendorf had replaced Ken Hansen and Joe Coughlin had taken a leave of absence to do missionary work in Costa Rica. Taylor continued to serve on the board's candidate committee, giving him the opportunity to screen new staff prospects.

But Taylor's involvement with Brigade was far from over. For years, he had nurtured the idea of a major camp facility for leadership development of young men, especially those who were part of the Brigade movement. He had already helped Young Life and Inter-Varsity obtain camp properties and had been quietly buying land in northern Michigan for some years.

In 1956, he announced to the board that the Foundation was prepared to donate 1800 acres that included the entire stretch of Rapsom Creek where he had spent many delightful hours as a boy. The Foundation would also build a dam to form a lake and help raise the money for the buildings if the Brigade assumed responsibility for the program and maintenance of the property.

The board accepted his offer and launched a fund-raising campaign to build what became known as the Northwoods Leadership Training Center. In 1961, a main lodge, several cabins and a beautiful site were dedicated and an innovative program of leadership training for teenage boys begun. For more than a dozen years, CSB staff conducted such programs as survival camps, flight instruction and missionary outpost training attracting boys and men from every part of North America (and even overseas missionaries on furlough). But the sudden increase in gasoline prices in the mid-70s made transportation to remote areas like the Upper Peninsula a costly enterprise. Almost overnight, Northwoods lost its constituency and in 1977, the property was sold.[19]

Yet Northwoods remained an illustration of bold vision translated into concrete action, the trademark of Herbert Taylor's career. "Don't let people or circumstances discourage you," he told the board after Northwoods was completed. "If you get knocked down, jump up and keep on going."[20]

Beyond these five youth organizations that Taylor nurtured into self-sufficiency were a host of agencies, programs and individuals who obtained his financial support, and in many cases, his personal interest. Over 200 organizations were recipients of gifts from the Christian Workers Foundation. They included evangelistic organizations, Bible

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[19]The demise of the Northwoods training facility was not unrelated to the inadequate financial resources of the Brigade organization and its earlier commitment to regional camping. Brigade never achieved the status, size or economic health that Young Life and Inter-Varsity did, which was always a personal disappointment to Taylor. Though often compared to the Boy Scouts, Brigade was never a serious competitor.

[20]Minutes of the Christian Service Brigade Board of Directors, November 1964.

colleges, political organizations (almost always Republican), study centers (such as the American Institute of Holy Land Studies), and even labor union welfare funds.

Invariably, Taylor gradually reduced his contributions to an agency over a period of years in order to stimulate them to develop a broader base of support. "We cut new trails, tried new ideas, experimented with new systems and methods," Taylor said. "everything the Christian Workers Foundation was connected with during all these years can appropriately be called pioneering."[21]

Foundation funds not only helped to convert these humble enterprises into viable, growth-oriented organizations, but they created a network of independent evangelical agencies geared to impact American culture in ways which Protestant churches had been unable to do for almost a century. Taylor's initial interest in youth eventually grew to a commitment to enhancing the status of the once-ridiculed fundamentalists and mobilizing them to regain a position of influence.

The restoration of fundamentalism to respectability and influence has been documented by several scholars in recent years.[22] The religious revival of the 1950s removed the distain with which numerous Protestants had been treated. The conservative reaction that occurred during the same era permitted religious leaders a voice in the public forum, particularly on moral and social questions. Much of this would not have occurred, however, if the fundamentalists themselves had not changed.

Having been forced out of the mainline denominations, they became aggressive evangelists and Bible teachers concentrating on the "unsaved" population. This led to numerical growth, sizable resources and a national network of ministers and laymen. When the National Council of Churches attempted to muscle the fundamentalists off the national radio networks around 1940, they met with failure. The fundamentalists formed their own association and persuaded the networks to continue allowing them to buy airtime. The fact that they could raise the funds was an indication of their new strength.

These same fundamentalists broke ranks with their extremist wing which continued to major on what they were against—modernism, liberalism, communism—rather than on a positive gospel. The National

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[21]Taylor, *Plan,* 85.

[22]David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, ed. *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975); James A. Hedstrom, "Evangelical Program in the United States, 1945–1980: The Morphology of Establishment, Progressive and Radical Platforms" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt, 1982); Joel A. Carpenter, "The Renewal of American Fundamentalism, 1930–1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins, 1984). Though written in an earlier period, Louis Gaspar's *The Fundamentalist Movement* (New York: Mouton, 1963) is an excellent treatment.

Association of Evangelicals formed in 1942 represented in effect a decision by mainstream fundamentalists to stop fighting with other Christians, liberal or not. Individuals like theologian Carl F.H. Henry called for a new evangelical scholarship and active participation with non-evangelicals for social betterment.[23] Another fundamentalist, Millard Erickson, described this new attitude as culture-affirming rather than culture-rejecting.[24] By the 1950s, the fundamentalist camp had divided between moderates and hard-liners. The moderates, who preferred the label "evangelical," were clearly in the majority, and it was their leaders (e.g. Billy Graham, Charles Fuller, Harold Ockenga) who became the symbols of a positive, upbeat brand of conservative Protestantism. These were exactly the people that Herbert Taylor appreciated and supported.

By the late 1940s, Taylor was already moving in larger spheres of influence which brought him into imtimate contact with these moderate fundamentalists. Radio preacher Charles Fuller became a close personal friend when Taylor decided to help underwrite the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour broadcast in 1940. Fuller was attempting to broadcast across the country from his auditorium in Pasadena, California, and benefitted from Taylor's experience with radio. At Taylor's initiative, Club Aluminum had sponsored its own weekly broadcast of "favorite hymns of famous people" (with contributions by such figures as General Patton, J. Edgar Hoover and Eddie Rickenbacker).

Fuller was one of the first preachers to take advantage of radio, beginning in 1925. Pressured by the Mutual Broadcasting System to pay the much higher rates of an entire network broadcast, Fuller took the step and appealed to supporters like Taylor. By 1940, his broadcast was heard over 1000 stations with an audience of two million.[25]

In 1944, Taylor collaborated with Fuller to realize the latter's vision for a conservative evangelical seminary. For Taylor, such an institution could "provide a large number of young evangelists to use in youth movements such as Youth for Christ and in citywide evangelistic meetings."[26] He maintained close contact with Fuller for several

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[23]Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 80. See also Henry's *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). Though conservative by any current measurements of American evangelicalism, Henry was seen as a progressive fundamentalist in the 1940s and 1950s. Since he was also a leading intellectual, he was tabbed as the first editor of the new evangelicals' organ, *Christianity Today,* founded in 1956.

[24]Millard Erickson, *The New Evangelical Theology* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming Revell, 1968), 200.

[25]Wilbur M. Smith, *A Voice for God: The Life of Charles E. Fuller* (Boston: W.A. Wilde, 1949), 124.

[26]Herbert J. Taylor to Charles E. Fuller, December 19, 1944. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 33, File 19. See also Herbert Taylor, "Why I Serve Fuller Seminary as a Trustee" in *Bulletin of Fuller Theological Seminary* 16:1 (Winter, 1967).

years until a faculty had been recruited (which included Henry and Ockenga), land purchased and a program of study established. The first meeting of the trustees was held in Taylor's office in Chicago. The Foundation donated $1000 a year to the seminary plus numerous scholarships for students. Taylor remained a trustee for most of his life. He took particular delight in the numerous Fuller graduates who joined the ranks of the youth organizations he had created.

Taylor's affiliation with Rotary International deepened during these same years and he eventually joined the executive ranks of the Chicago chapter. In 1955, the fiftieth anniversary of Rotary, Taylor was chosen International President and took a world tour with his wife visiting Rotary chapters and projects in 18 countries and meeting heads of state (he even made the front cover of *Newsweek* magazine which hailed Rotary as "a powerful force for international understanding").[27] Taylor's rise to prominence among Rotarians was in large part due to the Four-Way Test which Taylor donated to them and which contributed to the enormous growth of Rotary. The one club in Chicago begun by Paul Harris and eleven business leaders with its goal of building a public comfort station had mushroomed to 8300 chapters worldwide with a membership of almost 400,000 in 1955 (all of them attending weekly meetings regularly).[28]

By the mid-fifties, Rotary had shed its image of a small-town, simple-minded businessmen's lunch with a pep-rally atmosphere (perpetrated in part by Sinclair Lewis and H.L. Mencken) and established itself as a massive network of dedicated middle-class leaders engaged in building hospitals, sponsoring foreign students and establishing vocational schools for youth around the world. Taylor and his fellow Rotarians took pride in their ability to transcend all racial, political and religious barriers. Rotary members put "service to others" above all else, Taylor claimed, and this brought men of all backgrounds together into a common effort.

The spirit of Rotary blended smoothly with Taylor's Christian faith which emphasized action over doctrine. "I have never met a Rotarian that did not have some faith in God or a Divine Being," he stated.[29] This universal religious instinct was the basis for the ideals that marked Rotary's service theme. Taylor firmly believed that he could appeal to a Muslim, Jew or Christian to work for the greater welfare of others, for the Four-Way Test was a common denominator of all the faiths.[30] His encounters with Rotarians in Chicago and many

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[27]*Newsweek* (February 28, 1955), 25–32. See also "On the Trail of the Taylors" in *Rotarian* (January, 1955).

[28]*Historical Review of Rotary* (Evanston: Rotary International, 1985).

[29]Quoted in Roy D. Hickman, "Herbert J. Taylor—A Tribute" in *Rotarian* (July, 1978), 47.

[30]Quoted in McDermott, "Broke in 1933," 36.

other nations confirmed this belief for him. He never expressed any personal tensions between this broad humanitarianism of Rotary and the explicit demands of evangelicalism to follow Christ alone. His ease in both worlds no doubt reflected the stance of his fellow evangelicals.

In fact, Taylor's evangelistic zeal never waned and by the late 1950s, he exerted his greatest effort on behalf of the gospel message. Determined to convert the masses of Chicago, Taylor began to woo the premier evangelist, Billy Graham. Taylor had participated in previous attempts to impact Chicago, such as the Youth for Christ rallies at Soldiers Field in the mid-1940s. As a member of the Chicago Bible Society, and later its president, he engineered the mailing of thousands of Bibles to Chicago homes.[31] None of these campaigns, however, produced the spiritual awakening that he desired for the metropolis and so he appealed to Graham, who by the later 1950s, had preached to the largest crowds ever assembled and was on speaking terms with the nation's President.

Graham refused to come to Chicago believing he was a "prophet without honor" in the city where he had first been a preacher. The fact that both the liberal Chicago Church Federation and the hard-line fundamentalist leaders in Chicago were antagonistic convinced Graham that a Chicago crusade would not work. Taylor persisted, recruiting 300 laymen to lobby their pastors, and after a breakfast meeting with Graham attended by 700 ministers, he obtained Graham's agreement to come.

The crusade was conducted in June, 1962, at McCormick Place with a concluding rally in Soldiers Field that attracted a record crowd of 116,000. About 17,000 persons were converted and $719,000 raised in contributions. A success by all quantitative forms of measurement, the crusade pleased Taylor immensely. Later, Graham confided that the event had been "Herb Taylor's crusade."[32] Ten years later, Graham returned to Chicago for another crusade, again at the behest of Taylor, whose health was waning but whose love for well-organized evangelism was as intense as ever.

For most of his adult life until his death in 1978, Taylor lived in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge where he was very active at First Methodist Church. He and his wife, Gloria, taught the high school Sunday school class for more than twenty-five years. He was also a church trustee and the spark plug of the adult fellowship group. The stained glass windows of this historic church were contributed by Taylor after his wife's mother passed away.[33]

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[31]Herbert J. Taylor to Nathaniel Leverone, December 19, 1966. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 6, Folder 21.

[32]Robert Walker, interview held on June 9, 1986. Wheaton, Illinois.

[33]Ralph Bachman, interview held on June 23, 1986. Evanston, Illinois.

Yet Taylor's loyalties to the Methodist denomination were more tenuous, especially as he affiliated with conservative evangelicals like Billy Graham and Robert Walker. He held back funds for small, struggling Methodist churches in the Chicago area because he wasn't convinced the ministers were preaching "a real gospel message."[34] Several overtures from Northwestern University president, James A. James, to join the board of trustees were rejected as were requests from Garrett Biblical Institute for scholarship funds (Taylor only became generous when he was assured that the students were fundamentalists).[35] He even voiced his concern to the denominational publishing house for its lack of "evangelistic emphasis" in church school literature.[36]

While never hostile or belligerent, Taylor grew increasingly ardent in his zeal for a Bible-based, traditional faith and yearned for its restoration in the denomination of his youth.[37] Any organized efforts to promote Bible reading and teaching appealed to him as did campaigns to distribute Bibles. Taylor was not alone in this concern. By the 1950s, many Methodists were expressing alarm at the widespread ignorance of biblical teaching and history among the laity. The devotional guide, *The Upper Room,* became a successful antidote to this biblical illiteracy.[38] In 1970, he gave strong encouragement to the Good News caucus of evangelical Methodists which he believed could "rekindle the spiritual fires of the Church."[39]

Beyond his theological differences with the Methodist brand of liberal Christianity, Taylor had little confidence in the institutional church and its ability to reach the masses. Neither the church nor the home were providing adequate Christian instruction for young people, Taylor concluded in the 1930s, and for this reason he chose to create nondenominational agencies to "reach unchurched children and eventually, funnel them into the church of their choice."[40] Not surprisingly, these agencies were controlled by businessmen like himself, not clergy.

The contours of Taylor's personal faith are not only evident in the imposing array of organizations that he sponsored but also in the

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[34]Herbert J. Taylor to Turley Stephenson, May 12, 1940. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 1, Folder 18.

[35]Herbert J. Taylor to James A. James, November 26, 1941. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 1, Folder 18; Horace Greeley Smith to Herbert J. Taylor, November 22, 1940. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 11, Folder 17.

[36]Harry Denman to Herbert J. Taylor, May 14, 1949. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 1, Folder 5.

[37]Herbert J. Taylor to Carl F.H. Henry, August 29, 1966. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 6, Folder 21.

[38]Murray Leiffer, *The History of American Methodism,* Volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), 563.

[39]Robert Mayfield to Billy Graham, December 7, 1970. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 2, Folder 11.

[40]Taylor, *Plan,* 48.

homilies, exhortations and personal testimonies that he delivered on numerous occasions. Without doubt, Taylor was a warmhearted pietist. After a serious illness in 1947, he memorized the entire Sermon on the Mount and repeated it daily for the remainder of his life. At least one hour per day was devoted to Bible reading and memorization.[41]

He was also an efficiency-minded pragmatist. he appreciated religious endeavors that produced results, such as conversions, and had little patience for traditional, timeworn methods. He especially ignored doctrinal disputes amont conservative Christians. Woods admitted that many fundamentalists considered Taylor a "Methodist do-gooder" and "not sufficiently a Bible-banger."[41] What interested him in business and religion was the "bottom line"—helping other people, introducing them to Christ, getting them to be successful in achieving their goals.

He remained confident that Rotary-style diplomacy could overcome ideological differences; when the National Association of Evangelicals was attacked by right-wing fundamentalists in 1942, Taylor admonished NAE executives for fighting back. He said, "I have always found that when you have a controversy on your hands, it is better to walk into the other fellow's camp, find out where he is vulnerable and attempt to sell him on your point of view."[43] It was precisely this attitude that marked the new evangelical style which helped to set aside the traditional type of feisty fundamentalism. Obviously, the preachers listened to Taylor.

For Taylor, there were laws and principles established by God for all human beings which, if followed diligently, guaranteed personal success. To be honest and reliable in all business matters, to return a portion of one's profit into Christian projects out of gratitude to God, to earn one's wealth rather than have it given to him, were all axioms that Taylor applied to his own affairs and urged upon others. He enjoyed simplifying these moral precepts into codes, such as the Four-Way Test or his Ten Marks of a Good Citizen, in order to disseminate the wisdom which he humbly believed came from God. Because they were God's rules, a person could not help but succeed if he operated according to them.

> I have shown you that God had a plan for me. God also has a plan for you; He has a plan for your neighbor; He has a plan for the United States, and He has

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[41]Taylor, *Plan,* 88. See also Robert Walker, "H.J. Taylor: Four Way Tester" in *Power* (Wheaton, Illinois), 10 September 1961, 6.

[42]Woods, *Growth,* 59. As president of the Chicago Bible Society, Taylor enthusiastically promoted Eugene Nida's translation called *Good News for Modern Man*. He presented Nida with the Gutenberg award in 1967 at a Chicago banquet. *Good News* was anathema to hard-line fundamentalists who remained loyal to the King James Version.

[43]Herbert J. Taylor to J. Elwyn Wright, July 6, 1942. Herbert Taylor Papers, Box 65, Folder 16.

> a plan for every country and person on this earth. No one escapes his scrutiny, and there can be little peace or satisfaction in a man's life until he conforms to God's wishes.[44]

Implicit in this model of success was the image of a fulfilled individual who was achieving his or her own goals, a self-motivated person who had been true and faithful to the talents and abilities he or she possessed. The stuff of commencement speeches, this conception left no room for establishing one's identity within the context of a family, or religious community, or ethnic enclave. One's sense of self-worth had to be acquired and could not be merely given. While Taylor certainly had many friends, his religious faith was distinctly individualistic rather than corporate. He moved in and out of religious and secular circles without difficulty.

This conservative brand of Protestantism was inherently modern for the communal roots were gone and in their place grew a re-created community of believers relating to one another as workers for the cause of Christ. Many of these workers, like Taylor, were entrepreneurs in a religious market. They functioned as independent operators. Good business methods were needed to achieve measurable success.

The end result was a bureaucratic Protestantism, what Gibson Winter in 1961 described as "the organization church" whose mark was a "bustle of activities" that served as a substitute for the inclusive community of an older urban church.[45] The new Protestant church (Winter had the liberal one in mind but the new evangelical version was very much the same) was splintered along economic lines and offered a gospel that was geared primarily to the personal needs of its members. In the long run, such a church had no more of an impact on the urban landscape than the one it replaced.

While Taylor undoubtedly wished to rejuvenate a lethargic church and prevent the loss of its youth, he propelled the "free enterprise" boom in post-War evangelicalism which diminished the churches' control over religious activity. Entrepreneurs like Taylor shaped a parachurch phenomenon that integrated business values and practices with a simplified faith suitable for modern man. Pragmatic in its orientation, this variant of Protestantism became increasingly dominant in American culture, so that by the time Taylor died, even presidential candidates admitted they were "born again."

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[44]Taylor, *Plan,* 126.

[45]Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 83.