

Why is Montreat Getting a New Chapel?

By Jennifer Mobley

Construction on Montreat's new Christian Studies Center is expected to begin on the first of April this coming spring, and completion is planned for the following March. While many students and faculty have been referring to the new building as another chapel, it is in fact much more than that according to Jac Whatley, Director of Development.

"The building will house classrooms and offices, mainly for the Bible and Religion department, on the ground floor," Whatley explained. Also included in the plans for this floor is a seminar room for smaller classes and meetings, and a kitchenette. The classrooms will be equipped with modern media technology, and as an added convenience, can be made into one large room if necessary.

The upper floor will include the Chaplain's office and the chapel, which will be "quite small," said Whatley. "It will seat about 213 people."

In response to many students who are wondering why Montreat is building a chapel that small, Whatley noted that it will be used for "the Montreat Presbyterian Sunday school class, music recitals, and similar gatherings throughout the year and during the summer." It will have pianos and an organ, and the hope is that it will meet some of the demand for meeting places on campus.

Whatley explained that "the chapel is only a limited part of the function" that the Christian Studies Center will serve.

The campus has already begun to reap the benefits from the Center, Whatley pointed out, with the addition of a much larger paved parking lot behind the library. Because of city

parents," said Whatley. Approximately one million dollars was needed to build the Center, and the fundraising is complete. "We have what we need to construct and outfit the new building," expressed Whatley.

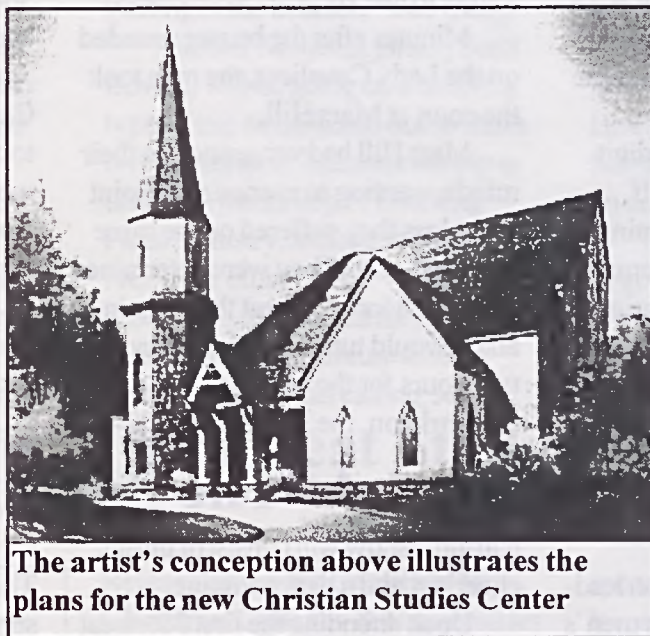
Whatley called the building project "a step on the road" to one day being able to take on a much

larger project, like a new fitness and recreation center.

At last estimate, a new gym would cost the campus around 4.5 million dollars, and would require a very large donor base. It has been over ten years since the last building project on campus, the Belk Center, and because of that, Whatley explained, "We have had to rebuild our donor base." He continued, "It is to our advantage to start with a smaller project, and then move on to the larger projects," such as a new gym.

Whatley put the magnitude of such a project in perspective when he said that "the largest donation ever given to Montreat was one half million dollars." Several equally generous donations would be needed to build a new gym.

It is Whatley's hope that the building of the Christian Studies Center will not only benefit the campus and the community, but will also facilitate the further growth of the campus and make future building projects possible.



The artist's conception above illustrates the plans for the new Christian Studies Center

ordinances, Montreat was required to build the lot to accommodate the addition of the offices and classrooms in the new Center.

About 500 different people made generous donations to the building fund for the Christian Studies Center, but it was a "single key donor" who really made the Center possible. This key donor saw the need in the Montreat community for a central building that "spoke visually of the community's ties to Christ, and he gave the money in honor of his