

1994

James T. Jeremiah

James T. Jeremiah
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Recommended Citation

Jeremiah, James T., "James T. Jeremiah" (1994). *Oral History Project*. 10.
https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/oral_histories/10

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James T. Jeremiah Interview, c 1994

The interview concerned the planning and building of a new chapel in the 1970s, a building which is now the Apple Technology Resource Center.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 2: We're rolling.

Interviewer: Tell me, where did the idea for the chapel come from?

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, it came from a lot of sources, I would think. We have a crowded condition. It come from the students, and the trustees saw the need of it, and they discussed it and planed for it. I mean, it was out of necessity, much like it is today.

Interviewer: This was back in 1975?

Dr. Jeremiah: Yes, about then, I guess, '75, '76.

Interviewer: Could we start a sentence by saying "Back in 1975, we knew we needed a new chap-?"

Dr. Jeremiah: That's right. We could say that.

Dr. Jeremiah: Back in 1975, we knew we would need a new chapel. The need was evident from the need of the students, the faculty, staff, trustees, they all had a part in it.

Interviewer: What was the idea behind building a new chapel? How many students? Tell me the story about how you started with 1,200 and went to 2,000.

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, we started out in the planning to seat 1,200. We, of course, had two services every day, two chapel services in the other building, and that wasn't working too well. So we planned more than that building could seat, and we thought that was enough. Even when we did that, we had one man who felt it was too big, and then the trustees discussed it and decided to increase the size from 1,200 to 2,000.

Dr. Jeremiah: The first commencement we had after that, I think this fellow who made the suggestion that it was too big, came late and had to stand. He's a good man, one of my dear friends, so I'm not criticizing him, but I appreciate the man's willingness to speak his mind. That's what we wanted, and we got help.

Interviewer: How was the fundraising for the chapel?

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, like always, it wasn't easy. We got some money from churches. We had meetings in various parts of the country, trying to get excitement from it, and we got quite a bit of money that way. Then the attempt was always made to reach individuals, and the chapel was paid for. So we're grateful we reached the goal.

Dr. Jeremiah: I'm not even sure how much the total picture was, but a lot less than the one today.

Interviewer: Who picked the site for chapel? How was that designed? Who decided where to put it?

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, a whole lot of people. As always, we had people working with it and making studies of it, and it was then pretty much on the edge of the campus. We knew if we expand some, we thought it might be in central part of it, and we wanted near the road so people could get to it easily, and that was available.

Dr. Jeremiah: That's part of a farm that we purchased, and it was built where once stood a trailer camp for the students. Not very far from it was an old house that we had to tear down, but it was, I think the decision of a lot of people.

Interviewer: You okay? Sound okay? So, very good.

Interviewer: Did the construction begin in this in the spring then?

Dr. Jeremiah: Yes, I think so. I think we did begin, and it went along pretty well. We didn't have any problems with it that I know of, but it was a great day when we could go in it.

Interviewer: Do you remember some of the construction? Did you go visit the construction?

Dr. Jeremiah: Yes, I went and visited it, took pictures of it. I have some slides of the construction of the building. I made more tours over to that one than I've been in this one. I don't like the idea of a hardhat I guess, but that's all right. I mean, I'm glad they do that.

Interviewer: So the construction was on schedule?

Dr. Jeremiah: Yes, I think so, far as I can remember. You never build a building, I guess, like that without having to do some things after you get in it, you know, but it was available, so we used it, and whatever else had to be done was done, but it was pretty well finished.

Interviewer: What kind of design did you go for? What were you thinking when you planned the ...?

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, the building was designed so that it could be expanded, and that was one thing. Now the way that would have happened would be that they would take the space that's used by the corridors and then make corridors on the outside of the building, but that still would not be large enough to meet the needs of the school today. I think it was a wise decision not to do that, because it would have a set aside what ought to be done now.

Interviewer: Do you remember when the building was first opened? Is it the fall? Did it start the school year ...?

Dr. Jeremiah: Yes, so I think we did. We started the school year with it. If I'm not mistaken, I think we did.

Interviewer: Do you remember that worship service at all, the first service?

Dr. Jeremiah: No. It was a time of praise and time of joy. I don't remember anything about the details of it. We had too many of them. I can't keep track of them.

Interviewer: Was Paul Dixon here at that time?

Dr. Jeremiah: He lived here then, and he became President in '78.

Interviewer: What are your memories from the chapel? Can you think of some of your favorite memories?

Dr. Jeremiah: I think the memories that will stay with me is the decisions that have been made by young people. The reason we have the chapel is so that all of us can be presented daily with a message from God, and when you see these young people respond, and the faculty members as well, respond to serving the Lord, I think that's the memory that makes it the happiest time for me.

Dr. Jeremiah: There have been some times in the chapel when have been extra special speakers. That's been fine, but they are specialists, but when they aim at that goal of reaching these young people to serve the Lord, and those are the memories that count. I was happy just recently to be there when an invitation was given to these young people to come forward, and I was asked to close in prayer, and I had to almost wait until they could get them out of the aisles before I could get there. That was quite an experience, to see that happen. That's happened many times.

Interviewer: You okay?

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:06:43].

Interviewer: Could you tell me one more time, start with the sentence with, "I think my favorite memories of the chapel are when we come together as a family."

Dr. Jeremiah: You want me to say that?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Jeremiah: I think that my favorite memories, when we come together as a family, to have God speak to us and for us to be responsive. I think all of us who have gone there, faculty and staff and students, have had days of decision, and that's worthwhile. That means that, in the case of the young people, it's going to last maybe for a lifetime, and then the rest of us, we're going to need that all the time.

Interviewer: Are you going to miss it at all?

Dr. Jeremiah: Oh, it'll be different, but I'll tell you, I am not regretting the building of the new one. I'm happy about that, and I can't wait until it starts, and we see how many people we can get in there, how to fill it, see? And we will, too.

Interviewer: Are there any conferences or things you remember in there, specific ones?

Dr. Jeremiah: Well, we've had missionary conferences that have been beneficial. We've had Bible conferences. I have been glad that, one or two occasions, my oldest son has been the speaker. That's been an exciting time, and we've had some speakers that have really challenged people. It's hard to keep track of all of them, because they've been so many of them. It's been a good experience.

Dr. Jeremiah: When we first started, we had our meeting chapel up in the administration building, and then we went over to what is now the bookstore, and then we went across the street to the old gym. We grew with the chapel as the school grew.

Interviewer: Very good. Is there anything else you can think of that you'd like to say about the ...?

Dr. Jeremiah: No, except I'd like to let everybody know how happy I am about the new one, what we're going to see as a result of that. That's the important thing, what we're going to do in the future by the grace of God.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Dr. Jeremiah: That's all you need, huh?

Interviewer: That's all we need.