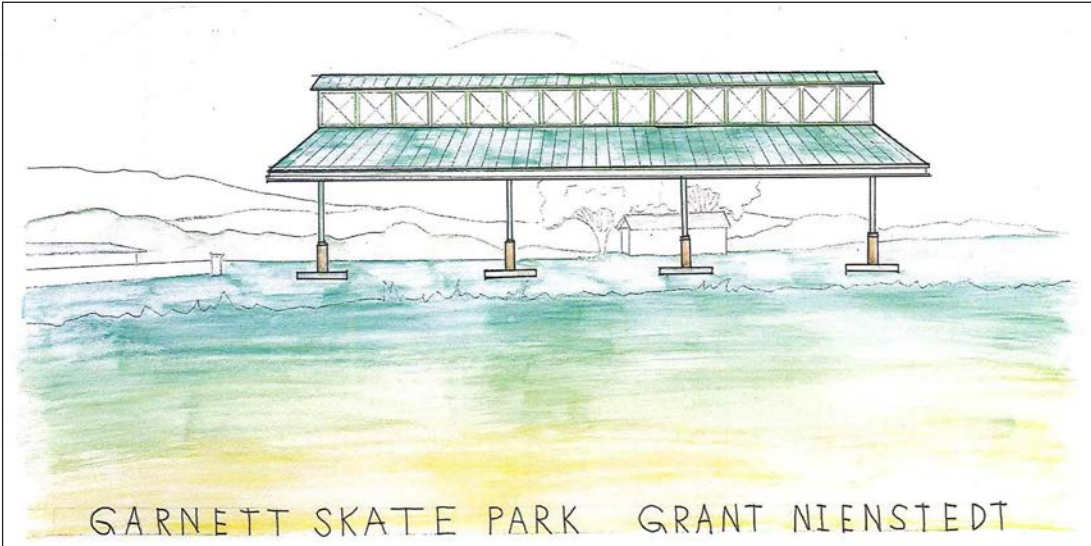


Additional pavillion sketches (from Page 1)



God and America’s obesity crisis, Speaking Truth by Clint Decker

CLAY CENTER – Based on government data in the 1960s and 70s around 13% of Americans were considered obese while less than 1% were defined as morbidly obese. However, in the 1980s and 90s waistlines began to dramatically increase. Today, according to USAFacts, obesity rates have tripled in America over the last 60 years with nearly 70% being either overweight or obese.

This has given rise to over 250 health problems like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, strokes, fatty liver diseases, some cancers, fertility issues, mental health problems and more. In 2016 over \$260 billion was spent on obesity related healthcare, while in 2024 it increased to \$385 billion.

We have a health crisis in America!

Where is the church and Christian ministries on this? Are we not pro-life? This crisis is leading to obesity-related deaths by the thousands and chronic related sicknesses by the millions. Our families, churches and communities are all touched by this.

Does God have anything to say about our health?

Jesus said, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31) This refers to loving and serving God with your whole being, which includes your body. For believers, taking care of our body is an expression of our love for God. For when we do, we can more effectively serve others, whereas obesity limits us in different ways. Additionally, it is written “...whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) This is communicating that in all things, including what we eat and drink, we are to do for the glory (or honor) of God.

The goal of living a healthier life is first about God, second about others and last about you. It is not primarily about YOU looking good in the mirror or YOU feeling good about yourself. The Bible says, “Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” (Ecclesiastes 10:17) What is the purpose of eating and drinking? It is not for personal pleasure or self-indul-

gence, for that is where many of our problems start. Rather, it is to produce the strength and energy we need to serve God and others.

What are some practical ways we can fight against obesity?

1. Live with belief. Believe it is possible for you to eat and live a healthier life. No matter what your past failures have been. No matter what your existing health problems are. No matter what your genetics are. Believe that you can overcome.

2. Live with a plan. Turn your belief into action. Seek out a practical diet and exercise plan.

3. Live with a goal. Whatever you aim at is what you will hit. Set small reasonable weight loss goals.

4. Live with common sense. Make better choices. Eating smaller portions and fruits and vegetables is good. Eating larger portions and piles of cupcakes is bad.

5. Live for the glory of God. Do not live with guilt over your weight, nor compare your body to anyone else’s. Fix your eyes on Jesus and live for His praise alone.

6. Live with a persevering mindset. Know this will be extremely difficult but determine that you will never quit! Never! Jesus came to die and rise again that we might no longer be enslaved by the things of this world. He created you and He knows the battles you face. In Christ, you have all you need to live a healthy life.

A prayer for you – Lord God, we ask for your help to begin living a healthier life. We need your enabling power. We are weak, but you are strong. Help us O God and grant us success. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Please share your comment at cdecker@great-awakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.

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