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News

### Porn pastor to deliver anti-porn message

Story by Alexander Tenenbaum | February 29, 2008  
*Montana Kaimin*

XXXChurch.com touts itself as the “#1 Christian Porn Site.” The site sells merchandise that proclaims “Jesus Loves Porn Stars,” “Purity Is Possible” and “Stop Floggin’ Your Dolphin.”

Craig Gross, the “Porn Pastor” and founder of XXXChurch.com, will be speaking at 7 p.m. on Monday in the University Center Theater on porn, Christians and whatever questions the audience throws at him.

Among Christians, he is known for writing several books including Starving Jesus, The Dirty Little Secret and The Gutter. But in the porn world, he’s the guy who drives the “PornMobile” to Adult Expos across the country, sets up a booth amidst the moans and groans of sex on a screen, and tells people in the porn industry that Jesus actually loves them despite what the fire-and-brimstone picketers outside say.

He’s anti-porn and pro-Jesus, and both views beg for argument. But the Web site’s “hatemail” wall, jammed mostly with gripes, comes from Christians who say the site is blasphemous, or at least inappropriate.

Mike Hinkle, the college pastor at Missoula’s Grace Pointe church, invited Gross to speak at the University of Montana. Hinkle said that most Christians don’t like to talk about porn, and the church stifles the dialogue. But porn is out there, and it’s a dirty little secret for a lot of people, he

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“It really does objectify women. It devalues women in a way that’s not fair to them,” he said. “And guys just get stuck on this stuff. They’re risking their jobs, risking careers just to look at it at work. For them it’s like alcohol. It hurts your kids and it hurts your wife, and it’s taking you away from them.”

Cecil Cain, manager of the Fantasy for Adults Only novelty store on Main Street, said people should just leave the porn industry alone.

“When it comes to morals, keep ‘em to yourself,” Cain said. “I have difficulty believing someone else knows what’s right for me.”

But Hinkle disagreed. He said that the porn industry sells a bigger lie than Hollywood sells with chick flicks.

“Just like chick flicks give us a false expectation of what love is, porn gives us a false expectation for what we should get out of getting into bed with someone,” he said.

He said the unfulfilled expectations created by porn leads to a letdown, and the letdown can make people resent the one they say they love, driving a wedge into the relationship.

Cain said he doesn’t try to tell anyone what to believe and neither should Christians.

“The rest of us should be left alone,” he said. “We sell a product that the general public wants. Everyone needs a job. If that’s his (Gross’s) job, great, but I don’t want any part in it.”

Hinkle said that while he hates porn, he understands that most people don’t feel the same way. Porn is a \$13-billion-a-year industry, and money has to come from somewhere. He said he isn’t into porn because he knows God.

“I can’t expect people who believe differently than me to behave the same way I do,” he said. But he said that calling yourself a Christian doesn’t keep you from porn, adding that it has cost more than a few pastors their jobs and more than a few Christians their marriages.

He said that his ministry, called Forma, is trying to create a real dialogue about spirituality on campus.

“I think it’s important for people to try to find out what Christians actually believe, instead of letting Jerry Fallwell and the ‘Moral Majority’ tell them what they believe,” he said.

Hinkle said he invited the Porn Pastor to come and speak as part of the mission to create dialogue, so that students can hear a different side of Christianity.

The Monday night talk isn’t the only place students can hear what Gross has to say. ABC’s Nightline is featuring a debate between the Porn Pastor and world-famous Pornstars Ron Jeremy and Jenna Jameson over pornography’s influence on people and society on Friday at 9:30 p.m.

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