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Pastor, porn star square off in adult-film debate on campus

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Last night in the Union, a debate raged -- the horny vs. the holy, the seedy vs. the sacred, the pervert vs. the preacher. Porn star Ron Jeremy, who has appeared in nearly 9,000 adult videos, and Chris Gross, an anti-porn advocate, argued over the effects of the pornography industry on society.

Gross, a pastor who founded xxxchurch.com, an online anti-porn ministry, tore into the adult film industry, claiming it is desensitizing to viewers and damaging to relationships.

"You're going to be disappointed with sex, if you aren't already, because it doesn't measure up to porn," Gross said. "Girls on campus can't compete with porn."

Although Jeremy agreed that porn is often used for self-gratification, he argued that it could actually strengthen relationships.

"It can be used to masturbate - I used to masturbate to Gilligan's Island," Jeremy said. "But couples see the movie together, they see half the movie, get up and then go to the bedroom."

The message porn sends to the viewers, Gross believes, is one that degrading women is all right, and with the exception of guy-on-guy videos, porn is for men.

"Sure, women can make money, Jenna Jameson has something like \$14 million," Gross said. "Women can make money, but that doesn't mean it empowers them. It's all about the guys, it empowers the guys."

Jeremy, who has a master's degree in special education, said it's not degrading because he knows many women who enjoy what some would consider rough and degrading sex acts, like receiving a facial.

"I don't mind getting an orgasm on my face," Jeremy said after the speech. Those who engage in it, he said, consider it romantic.

Being as easily accessible as it is, Gross believes porn is destructive and addicting, especially to young people, damaging their libido, ability to be intimate and their perception of reality.

"You may have the right to choose to watch it, but there is no such thing as 'Please watch porn responsibly,' " he said. "It's addictive and you will watch it more and more."

This is why Gross created xxxchurch.com - to help people overcome their adult film addiction. Gross has even attended adult film conventions and distributed Bibles that read "God Loves Porn Stars" on the cover.

But Jeremy said he believes porn should be compared to other vices that can be either abused or respected, like alcohol, automobiles or MySpace.

"You don't blame a whole business for a couple of idiots that aren't doing it right," Jeremy said.

The debate touched a lot on whether or not porn is degrading to women, but Missy Fletcher, senior, said she believes porn degrades men as a sex toy as well.

"It's really degrading to men, too, because it reduces man to the level of an animal. Instead of a man being able to love a woman and give himself completely to her, it's more like, 'No, I can't control myself, I want to use her for my own selfish kicks.' These people are so much more than porn portrays them as."

Some members of the audience, like sophomore Corey Dwyer, didn't take the debate as seriously and just wanted to see one of their favorite porn stars in person.

When a member of the audience asked Jeremy how many women he has been with, he answered nearly 4,000, and the crowd erupted. Then Gross answered the question, saying just one, and the crowd erupted even louder.