

## Minister says God can overcome power of pornography

Feb 03, 2008 @ 12:36 AM

By MICHAEL GANNON

Norwich Bulletin

Groton, Conn. -

A pancake breakfast in a church basement is not the typical setting to discuss pornography with more than 160 men.

But the Rev. Craig Gross's approach to stopping pornography is anything but typical.

Gross is the founder of XXXChurch, an on-line ministry and fellowship that has been combating pornography for six years using outreach rather than confrontation. Gross brought his message to the Pleasant Valley Community of Prayer and Praise Saturday for a "Porn and Pancakes" breakfast sponsored by Faith 2 Faith Ministries International.

Some of the men who attended the breakfast were concerned they or a family member had a problem with pornography; others were just seeking information.

"Some people have a void in their lives," Gross said. "But pornography is not real. It's a fantasy, not a real sexual experience that God intended to be wonderful."

Among Saturday's presentations was a video from a former pornography producer who once made \$4,000 a day before reaching out to XXXChurch; and one of a former police officer whom Gross counseled and accompanied on his surrender to federal prison on child pornography charges.

Gross, 32, began his ministry while serving as a youth pastor in California. His church members offer outreach and spiritual counseling for people who seek them out on their Web site, xxxchurch.com. They have programs to help actors, photographers and producers who want to leave the business.

"They tell us this isn't how they wanted to support their children; this wasn't how they imagined their lives turning out," he said. He also has seen people lose jobs, marriages, self-respect and, in cases of child pornography, go to prison because of their addictions.

The presentation consisted of encouragement, anecdotes, scripture, video interviews and prayer. He also met afterward with anyone interested in talking or asking questions.

Tom Miyashiro, a Faith 2 Faith representative from Montville, arranged Saturday's breakfast after seeing Gross debate famed porn star Ron Jeremy in Massachusetts.

"I was covering it for a Christian radio station," Miyashiro said. "I was impressed at how Craig was able to stand by his convictions in what was a hostile crowd."

Miyashiro said he put out the word about the men's breakfast largely through local churches.

"We've been contacted by parents concerned about their sons accessing pornography, wives concerned about their husbands," he said. "I've gotten a couple (negative) e-mails. But I must say

that most of the pastors have been very supportive.”

Some local residents, who declined to give their names, shared their stories about starting out as young as 12, typically seeing magazines belonging to their fathers.

Addressing the men in the audience who believe they have a problem, Gross said they must admit to themselves and someone else, be they family or close friends, that they have a problem. He said it is important to have someone willing to support them, but also be blunt with them if they are being dishonest about their problem.

The Web site offers a computer program that lists every Web site a person logs on to from a personal computer.

“The program asks you to designate two people,” Gross said. “Every week it sends a list of the sites you’ve logged on to to those two people. It also tells them if you’ve shut off the program and when.

“I’ve never seen anyone stop this alone,” he said. “You have to have accountability. But I don’t want you leaving here today feeling discouraged. There’s nothing you can do that will make God love you any less.”

Reach Michael Gannon at 425-4231 or [mgannon@norwichbulletin.com](mailto:mgannon@norwichbulletin.com).

#### AT A GLANCE

- The Rev. Craig Gross and porn star Ron Jeremy will participate in a debate about pornography at 8:30 p.m. Feb. 15 at Yale University as part of the annual Sex Week at Yale.  
The debate will be hosted by Martin Buchir of ABC’s “Nightline,” and will take place in the LoRicco Ballroom at 216 Crown St. in New Haven.
- Tom Miyashiro of Montville, an executive director with Faith 2 Faith Ministries International, said a recent survey found 47 percent of men who identify themselves as Christians have acknowledged they have had at least some exposure to pornography.
- Anyone who believes he or a loved one may have a problem with pornography can seek information at [xxxchurch.com](http://xxxchurch.com)