

LAS VEGAS AT LARGE:

Minister to base his war on porn at local church

By [Mike Trask](#)

Sun, Oct 26, 2008 (2 a.m.)

A minister who has achieved a degree of celebrity status for helping people addicted to pornography says he is moving his niche evangelical Christian effort to ground zero — Las Vegas.

Craig Gross, 33, has been running his XXXChurch from Michigan for seven years and traveling around the world delivering his message that pornography is toxic to family life.

In the next month he'll be in British Columbia, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Australia. His campaign includes college campus debates with porn star Ron Jeremy.

Gross said he decided to relocate to Las Vegas — where he launched his ministry in 2002 at an annual convention of the adult entertainment industry — because of all the residents and tourists who find themselves tempted by the Strip's adult environment.

“You've got escorts to your room in 20 minutes or less,” he said. “The temptations are more powerful and strong than any place I've ever been. You walk by magazine racks of pornography. You have guys handing you cards for escorts.”

Gross figures if he can minister at porn conventions, it should be easy to set up anti-porn booths at other conventions as a way to reach some of the millions of tourists who visit each year.

He has the support of the growing South Hills Church Community, a suburban church with about 1,200 active members, which plans to build a \$15 million church near Interstate 215 and St. Rose Parkway. Gross will refer Las Vegas Valley residents who seek spiritual guidance to South Hills and will be working closely with the church. He is speaking at the church today.

“I don't know that Craig has all the answers,” said South Hills Associate Pastor Nathan Phinney. “I don't know that we have all the answers. But we care enough to ask the questions.”

South Hills Pastor Bret Johnson said he is excited to help Gross expand his ministry.

“He (Gross) has enough history that he has credibility in the Christian community,” Johnson said. “His concern for people shows through. He has contacts in and out of the industry.”

Gross, a shaggy-haired father of two, says pornography goes far beyond harmless entertainment because it threatens marriages and is emotionally harmful.

He plans to set up a 24-hour-a-day phone line staffed by ministry members to counsel persons dealing with addiction to pornography, and hold events such as

“Porn and Pancakes,” a breakfast meeting aimed at educating men about the perils of pornography, and “Porn and Pastries,” a similar meeting aimed at women.

Gross says his organization, which will advertise itself on mobile billboards, will also provide rides for men who want to leave a strip club.

Above all Gross and his team — he said he has about seven people in town — plan to make themselves visible on the Strip to counsel people who seek them out.

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[Craig Gross @ South-Hills \(Sun, Oct 26, 2008 7:48 PM\)](#)

Discussion: 7 comments so far...

By [johnevegas](#)

10/26/08 at 5:52 a.m.

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I'm going to setup an anti-religion booth at the local Christmas fair. I'm sure it will be received well.

By [theolovesyou](#)

10/26/08 at 12:31 p.m.

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What sets xxxchurch apart is that they're not protesting outside. They're in the shows, they have a booth, and they get invited back. Despite the title of this article, these guys are the real thing; they bring a message of love and hope to some people who are very lonely; who are looking for answers and are trapped in or by an industry that takes advantage of them.

If you have a relationship with Christ, porn won't keep you out of heaven. It can destroy relationships and families though, which is why these guys are here, and why what they are doing is important. People come to this town for electronics conventions, and they end up doing things they didn't intend to. Things they really regret later. Jesus spent his time on earth with prostitutes and tax collectors. I applaud xxxchurch for taking some bold risks, and for showing love to people in the sex industry the way Christ would.

By [LVPaco](#)

10/26/08 at 1:04 p.m.

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I concur with you Johnvegas... Religion is poisoning this great nation. The porn industry is a business something Republicans claim to protect. The minister above needs to go back to Michigan and take your followers with you.

By [redferret](#)

10/26/08 at 2:52 p.m.

[Suggest removal](#)

This guy is the same nutter who said porn is more destructive and more addictive than heroin. I get that for some people they do have a problem with the stuff, especially odd or bad stuff. Most don't.

By [theolovesyou](#)

10/26/08 at 4:36 p.m.

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<http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries...>

By [johnevegas](#)

10/26/08 at 4:45 p.m.

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"Despite the title of this article, these guys are the real thing; they bring a message of love and hope to some people who are very lonely; who are looking for answers and are trapped in or by an industry that takes advantage of them."

You win. I can see that and totally get behind it.

"If you have a relationship with Christ, porn won't keep you out of heaven."

We almost agree. I'm just not quite that specific on the deity. Buddha, Krishna, etc... work as well, IMHO.

By [Flippy](#)

10/26/08 at 5:15 p.m.

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What better way for a porn addicted minister to get his fix than attending all the porn conventions and hanging out on porn sites in a supposed attempt to help other porn addicts? I don't think that you need to surround yourself with porn 24/7 to help other people who have a problem with it. However, if you're interested in it, that's exactly what you would do. "Oh, no, *I'm* not interested in seeing all of this filthy sex, I just want to help *you* stay away from it. If you need to get in touch with me, I'll be where the porn and the porn stars are."

"...and are trapped in or by an industry that takes advantage of them."

And exactly how does the seller of a product trap someone into buying the product? The industry doesn't hold a gun to anyone's head making them buy a magazine or a subscription to a website.