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Last Updated: 5:27 am | Thursday, May 11, 2006

Pastor, porn star argue impact UC students question debaters

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BY LORI KURTZMAN | ENQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The pornography star entered the room at the University of Cincinnati Wednesday night to roaring applause. He took his place behind a lectern - the same spot where UC President Nancy Zimpher once updated a crowd about her academic plan.

Some stood for the star. One man snapped his picture with a cell phone. There on the stage was chubby, balding Ron Jeremy, star of about 1,800 adult films and subject of curiosity for a crowd of 500 at UC's Tangeman University Center.

Then there was the other guy.



ZOOM

Ron Jeremy ta
crusader Craig
the wide world

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The anti-Ron Jeremy. A guy in a white dress shirt and a trendy haircut. Less familiar to the college set, Craig Gross is a pastor and founder of California anti-pornography Internet ministry XXXchurch.com, which, according to Time magazine, plans to hand out Bibles at erotica conventions.

Hosted by the UC Programs and Activities Council, the two were on campus to debate pornography and field questions. They had a similar debate last month at the University of Rhode Island.

Gross called porn "a cheap substitute for the real thing." He said it's addictive and creates unreal fantasies and taints people's views - especially men's - about sex and women.

"For some people, it leads to a dead end," Gross said.

Jeremy said pornography can be empowering to women and is not as harmful as Gross claims. He called it "part of the wide world of entertainment, nothing more, nothing less."

"How many of you saw porn before 18?" Gross asked the audience, emphasizing its easy availability. Several raised their hands. "But look," Jeremy responded, "they're all healthy, happy students."

After each man presented his side of the argument, students lined up to ask questions that ranged from porn's role in sexual violence and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases to how each felt God looked upon pornography.

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