

## BARING THEIR *Souls*

A FORMER STRIPPER AND A SOCIAL WORKER SPREAD GOD'S LOVE

STORY AND PHOTO BY PAT SHERMAN

Should San Diego face a sudden shortage of lap dancers, it will likely be the handiwork of Theresa Scher and Sheri Brown.

Twice a month, the women head to Pure Platinum, the Body Shop or any of San Diego's so-called gentlemen's clubs. Though they have the looks to land jobs working the pole, they are not there to entertain patrons.

Armed with pink Bibles and gift bags, Scher and Brown go to strip joints to spread the gospel of Jesus to dancers, and, if desired, offer women the support needed to exit the adult entertainment industry.

"We're not trying to tell them to stop working," stresses Scher, who herself worked as a nude dancer and escort for five years. "We're just there to support the girls, tell them God loves them and be their friends when they need it."

"We let God do the rest," Brown adds. "There's no script."

Three years ago, Scher and Brown formed the San Diego chapter of JC's (Jesus Christ's) Girls, based out of the Rock Church in Point Loma. The ministry, founded by former stripper Heather Veitch, also has chapters in Las Vegas; Austin,

Texas; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Scher and Brown make an unlikely duo. Brown is a former social worker who once harbored a toxic hatred of strippers—particularly when Little Darlings strip club moved into the Lemon Grove neighborhood where she was raising three young boys.

Scher began stripping at age 21, while going through a divorce. When she left the industry, she was working as an escort in Las Vegas, where she drove a new Corvette, lived in a gated community and earned as much as \$30,000 a month.

Feeling empty and broken one night, Scher made a decision to ditch the anonymous sex and drugs, sell her ill-gotten riches and move back in with her father.

"It was extremely painful and humiliating and humbling all at the same time," she says. "I was working a job making \$3,000 a month—when I could have made that in a good weekend."

By telling strippers that she once stood in their pumps, Scher says she is able to ease some initial tension and apprehension.

Free schwag doesn't hurt either.



"We're not just passing out Bibles," Scher says. "That would be really boring. We give them a really cute necklace or lip gloss—something that they can use, like Victoria's Secret lotions."

Several of the women they encountered in the clubs now attend bi-monthly Bible study groups hosted by JC's Girls. With the Girls' assistance, one stripper left the business to find God and gainful employment at a local Hyatt.

In August, Brown and a former stripper from Michigan traveled to Warsaw, Ohio (population 780), where members of a church had picketed outside a strip club for more than four years.

"Here these Christians are supposed to let everybody know how much God loves them, and these girls feel hated, judged and, like, worthless," Brown says.

Brown and associate Anny Donewald brokered a much-publicized peace accord between the strippers and the self-righteous, though picketing resumed after their departure.

Scher says the behavior exhibited by the Ohio church members doesn't surprise her, and that her Christian friends turned their backs on her when she began dancing.

In March, Scher and Brown will attend their second porn convention, the annual Adultcon at the Los Angeles Convention Center, offering prayer to both the purveyors and consumers of porn.

[therocksandiego.org/ministries/jcsgirls](http://therocksandiego.org/ministries/jcsgirls)