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## Christian mission at the porn convention

*Former stripper and former hooker share the gospel at Vegas' annual adult expo*

### Brad Greenberg

On this Wednesday last year, [Brent Hopkins](#) and I drove his Civic (not my Civic) out I-15 to Las Vegas for the annual AVN Adult Entertainment Expo. I am fairly certain that will be the only time I spend 20 hours over two days at a [porn convention](#). My excuse was that I was writing a [big story about adult-industry Christian ministries](#) for the *LA Daily News*' then-upcoming porn series.

I focused on the guys and gals of [XXXChurch.com](#), "the #1 Christian porn site," who are the most prominent of the anti-adult-industry ministries. Another character in this milieu is a former stripper named [Heather Veitch](#), (pictured on left) who runs JC's Girls. I spoke with her last year at her booth, a black backdrop with furry pink accents, that was for some reason located in the gay porn section. She's back in Vegas this week with [Hooker for Jesus](#) Annie Lobert, and an *LA Times* blog gives them [some play](#).

One Vegas topless bar allows Veitch to come at night to buy lap dances and use the time to talk to the dancers about Jesus. I have been invited along for a future trip and am very curious to see how that works out. Veitch says she has received almost no hostility from the people she is trying to reach in Vegas, even those not at all interested in her message.

On the other hand, selling her fellow Christians on her project has been difficult. Veitch has found that some churches are not interested in populating congregations with strippers she has invited to services. And then it always comes back to her look. Veitch says, "The Christian community can be very judgmental. But we think our look lets girls in the industry identify with us."

For the upcoming 40,000-strong Adult Entertainment Expo, Veitch and Lobert will be working the convention floor, handing out cards and delivering their message to whoever will listen.

There is no question that patrons and performers at the porn convention are open to Veitch and XXXChurch and the handful of other ministries. But after watching these interactions, I wasn't sure how effective they were. A lot of people listened, few people turned down the "Jesus Loves Porn Stars" Bibles handed out by XXXChurch, but they seemed to think it was more kitsch than Gospel.

Craig Gross, who runs XXXChurch, told me that people ask him all the time whether he feels like he is making a difference. And at one point he wasn't so sure. In his book "[The Dirty Little Secret](#)," he writes about a guy who he thought he had helped free from the bondage of porn -- only to find the guy later fly off the deep end.

Some Christians are cynical of Gross and his colleagues, claiming they're a bunch of

