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## Jail for Jehovah's Witness elder who molested girls

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A Jehovah's Witness elder who was exposed as a paedophile on Facebook has been jailed.

Jonathan Rose was branded a hypocrite as he was locked up for molesting two little girls he met through the church.

**Manchester Crown Court** heard that Rose, **of New Moston** , won the trust of his victims' families before targeting their daughters. His youngest victim was just five-years-old when she was groped by him in her own home. The other was ten when Rose, then 27, kissed her sexually.

Rose was first accused of indecently assaulting a teenage girl he met through the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1995. He was acquitted of that offence in a trial and went on to become an elder in his congregation.

However, after his first accuser branded him a 'paedo' on **Facebook**, his crimes against the two other girls came to light. Rose was found guilty of two charges of indecent assault and has now been jailed for nine months and banned from visiting homes where there are children present.

The joiner, who is married with children and continues to protest his innocence, showed no emotion as he was jailed and made subject to a sexual offences prevention order. He must sign the sex offenders register for life.

The court heard that he even sat in judgement in a church 'investigation' into the second victim when she was a teenager.

Her 'entirely normal' teenage behaviour was thought to be 'inappropriately sexual' by elders.

Antony Longworth, defending, handed the judge a bundle of supportive letters from fellow Jehovah's Witnesses which he described as expressing 'disagreement or disbelief' about the guilty verdicts.

But Judge David Stockdale QC told Rose: "You are now utterly disgraced – even though many members of that community still place a great deal of faith in you. The Jehovah's Witnesses... upholds very high standards of moral behaviour – you deviated altogether from those standards."

The family of Rose's first accuser say they were encouraged to cover up their allegation. He was cleared of groping the then teenage girl in 1995 trial, but she would go on to be a witness in the latest court case. Her family say they were hounded out of the Jehovah's Witnesses when they expressed concerns.

Her father told the M.E.N: "They held a meeting where they stood on a platform and said no-one should ever take a 'brother' to court. They dismissed our complaint as something that happened between teenagers.

"We were ostracised, and then told to get out of the congregation after the trial."

A spokesman for the Jehovah's Witnesses said: "Everyone has become more aware of how to deal with these issues in recent years. In no way would the Jehovah Witnesses purposefully try to protect anyone who is accused of serious crimes."

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