



## JEHOVAH WITNESS SEXUAL ABUSE – REAL OR FABRICATION?

Twenty-five years after I simply left the Watchtower organization, I found [www.Meetup.com](http://www.Meetup.com) and typed in a search for “ex-Jehovah’s Witnesses.” During one of our first few meetings, one of the topics that came up was the “alleged” sexual and physical abuse within the organization. Now, up until this point, I hadn’t heard *anything* about sexual abuse. After all, Jehovah’s Witnesses are the most righteous people on the planet, right? This could *never* be going on within their organization! If it did, it had to be an isolated occurrence, right?

Then an amazing thing happened. As we sat around the table, this person came forward and acknowledged she/he had been sexually or physically abused, and then that person, and then this person, and so on. What an eye opener! My jaw dropped to the floor. I was horrified to learn that in our little group the percentage could be so high. While this may or may not be indicative of all ex-Jehovah Witness groups, I have to wonder how *any* of this could take place within *God’s* organization. After seeing the tears in these people’s eyes, watching the Dateline broadcast and reading the stories on Bill Bowen’s website, [www.silentlambs.org](http://www.silentlambs.org), I have no doubt that **this is a serious problem**.

Why is the problem so serious? Because unlike the Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses “alleged victims” are required to produce *two* eye witnesses for every allegation of sexual abuse. This expectation appears briefly in their literature and most Jehovah’s Witnesses know nothing about it’s application to sexual abuse victims. In a nutshell, it goes like this: If there are not at least “**two eye witnesses**” to the actual crime of child molestation/rape, and the perpetrator denies the charge, the child is told *by Watchtower leaders* that they must treat their molester/rapist as an “innocent man” and continue to love and embrace him (or her).

The August 15, 1997 Watchtower says: *At least two witnesses are required to establish a charge of wrongdoing. (John 8:17; Hebrews 10:28) If the person denies the charge and your testimony is the only one, the matter will be left in Jehovah’s hands. (1 Timothy 5:19, 24, 25) This is done in the knowledge that all things are “openly exposed” to Jehovah and that if the person is guilty, eventually his sins will “catch up” with him.—Hebrews 4:13; Numbers 32:23.* Do you know of any religion that practices the above when dealing with the sexual abuse of children?

The Watchtower’s position of “leave it in Jehovah’s hands” means: remain silent and don’t do anything about it. And yet, common sense tells anyone that sexually abused minor children can rarely, if ever, produce one witness to their abuse, let alone *two*! What’s worse, the congregation members are seldom informed of their fellow ‘Christian’s’ alleged sexual abuse. Consequently, church members are kept in the dark and powerless to protect other children who most likely will befriend the alleged predator.

Over the last few years, thousands have reported being molested while feeling helpless. Silentlambs, run by Bill Bowen a former Elder (church leader), has given a voice to over 6,000 victims (see [www.silentlambs.org](http://www.silentlambs.org) ). To date Silentlambs has reported over 300 pedophiles to the police and numerous pedophiles have been turned over to the FBI. Note too that the Watchtower organization’s leaders have been directed to report allegations of sexual abuse to police only in states where they are mandated to do so (not all states have such a requirement).




Over 50 advocates have been excommunicated and shunned by their family and friends, besides Mr. Bowen, because they spoke out about crimes against Jehovah Witness children! One of these, Joel Jahn, went public with his story, which appears later in this article.

Most Jehovah’s Witnesses and indeed most of the general population know nothing about the Watchtower’s egregious two-witness practice. In fact, when I spoke to my father on the phone about 2 years ago, he denied that such a practice ever existed. His comment was, “That’s ridiculous, Brenda. What child has two eye witnesses? We (JWs) wouldn’t believe that!” When I told him it was in his own literature he became agitated and said, “We have every piece of literature for the last 25 years and we’ve never seen it!” I then offered to send him the article. He egged me on: “Yeah, I’d like to see *that*.” So I mailed it to him and highlighted the text.

A few weeks later I called and asked him what he thought about it. He replied, “Don’t ever send stuff like that to us again. It upsets your mother.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing! I said, “Dad, it *should* upset you—upset you to know that your religion doesn’t protect innocent children from sexual predators.” His response: “If it doesn’t affect me directly, I don’t worry about it.” I countered, “Dad, how old is “R” (my niece and his granddaughter). She’s about 10 right? What if she’s being sexually abused by someone in the Jehovah Witness congregation right now and no one believes her because she can’t produce two eye witnesses?” He grew silent. No response. Ostrich in the sand.

I then told him about the following news programs that reported on the sexual abuse of children within the Watchtower organization.

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|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|  | National-4/04  |  | Germany-2/03                        |
|  | CBS NEWS-4/03  |  | Denmark-11/02                       |
|  | Dateline-5/02  |  | Canada-1/03                         |
|  | CNN-8/02       |  | Slovenia-10/02                      |
|  | UK/BBC-7/02    |  | JW-Media                            |
|  | Australia-9/02 |  | NYT- 8/02                           |
|   |                |  | First Major Story on JW abuse 02/01 |



Despite some media cover, from coast to coast and in other countries this Watchtower “pedophile paradise” has continued to thrive.

Does the Watchtower feel their members are capable of sexual abuse? Hardly. This is one of the quotes from their literature: “**Those praising Jehovah as part of his earthly organization are clean, moral, godly persons**—most desirable indeed.” (The Watchtower, 5/15/88, p.17 §8)

I wonder, if one of the Governing Body members (one of the leaders of the Watchtower/Jehovah’s Witness organization) had been a parent, and if one of *their* children had been abused within the organization by another “brother in good standing,” would they uncover some “New Light” to encourage Elders within the congregations to report these alleged criminals to the police or take a more aggressive stand against child abuse? What would the leaders have done if just one of these *thousands* of abuse survivors had been a child of *theirs*?

Of course, since the Governing Body members have no children, we will never know the answer to this question. Perhaps this is the crux of the problem. As my father explained so nauseatingly well, it doesn’t affect them directly. Ostrich in the sand.

What’s really more important to *the leaders* of this organization: the reputation of the Watchtower organization as “Jehovah God’s sole mouthpiece on earth,” or the physical and psychological well-being of the children that they govern?

More pointedly, what is more important to the members—Jehovah’s Witnesses who are parents: protecting their religion from scandal or protecting their children from rape?

©Brenda Lee, 2007, author “Out of the Cocoon: A Young Woman’s Courageous Flight from the Grip of a Religious Cult,” [www.outofthecocoon.net](http://www.outofthecocoon.net)

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A message from Bill Bowen, [www.silentlambs.org](http://www.silentlambs.org):

Through the work of silentlambs, hundreds of child molesters have been reported to authorities and over seventy individuals have filed civil lawsuits against Watchtower, the administrative arm of the organization. The leadership maintains a hard-line stance of not admitting to anything wrong while quietly going after victims and members that try to support abuse survivors. We estimate well over thirty individuals have been disfellowshipped (and shunned) for simply saying child abuse is a problem in the religion. The public needs continued education. The greater the education about abuse, the harder it will be to allow directives from the Governing Body (Watchtower leadership) to protect all the pedophiles (within the Watchtower organization). Silentlambs is working to:

- 1) Expose the sexual abuse records within the Watchtower
- 2) Rectify inconsistent state-to-state laws; some states require clergy to report sexual abuse and others do not
- 3) Get the Watchtower to change its policy. All sexual abuse **MUST** be reported to law enforcement. The legal system was set up to deal with such matters. Just because the Watchtower doesn’t want to bring “reproach on Jehovah’s name” (i.e., the organization), doesn’t mean that they should act as judge and jury in cases involving criminal behavior.

***Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime.***



Joel Jahn, a former Jehovah's Witness living in the state of Washington was disfellowshipped from the organization for questioning the organization's sexual abuse policy. Following are excerpts from his story, which he courageously shared with the media. It was published in the "Davenport Times" on June 30, 2005.

## **Expelling of Joel Jahn from the Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses**

*At the time of Davenport's High School Graduation, 2005, I learned that I had been "marked" and was to be "shunned" when my brother, Jory, informed me that my wife and I were not welcome at my nephew Jade's graduation reception..This is because errant Jehovah's Witnesses are to be shunned by others in the faith. This means no social contact with Jehovah's Witnesses, including Jehovah's Witnesses family members...*

*However, there is a religious crime even more offensive in the eyes of Jehovah's Witnesses than what I have heretofore mentioned—and **that is to doubt that this religion**, which is directed by its corporate head, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., is the only way to salvation, and the only religion directed by God. Any questioning by a baptized member regarding the religion's teachings, many of which have been modified and changed, leads to expulsion from the congregation. This questioning is termed "apostasy," and, apparently, I have been judged guilty of "apostasy" **due to my voiced concern about my church's policies regarding the handling of sexual child abuse accusations and the reporting of such accusations.***

*Victims by the thousands have come forward due to the efforts of sympathetic individuals who support the silentlambs organization, which has spearheaded the disclosures about the sexual child assault problem within Jehovah's Witnesses' congregations. See [www.silentlambs.org](http://www.silentlambs.org) for complete and accurate information. At this web site you can view twenty TV documentaries from around the world and also hear the local Mark Fuhrman show discuss this matter. These programs have thoroughly analyzed the accusation made by victims and victim's advocates that Jehovah's Witnesses' organization has become a "pedophile paradise."*

*It has deeply saddened me that my religion protects pedophiles because of their continuing inadequate and antiquated rules that were followed by many churches during the Dark Ages. One such rule requires reporting an accusation to the church elders first before the police, thus, allowing DNA to be lost. Other rules silence victims, and may allow pedophiles to sit unknown next to Jehovah's Witnesses and their children in church and at social functions.*

*I believe that Jehovah's Witnesses should stop interfering in what is police business. If the Witnesses want to forgive pedophiles, okay, but let these criminals serve time in prison too! That's part of repentance. The elders should not cover up criminal behavior just to make the religion look good.*

*It is quite possible that no local area Jehovah's Witness will ever read this letter. As they have probably been told not to read the newspaper. This is because I warned the elders I would write to the paper if I could not address the congregation as a whole. The elders refused my request. The congregation **will obey** without question!*

*The only thing that will have any effect on Jehovah's Witnesses in this matter is if you challenge them when they call at your door.*

The information above appears on [www.outofthecocoon.net](http://www.outofthecocoon.net) (To all who read this: please print this entire article and hand it to the next two Jehovah's Witnesses who come to your door. You may be saving one of their children someday. Knowledge is power.)