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## Former churchman on child-sex counts

The Press | Wednesday, 25 July 2007

**A former member of the Exclusive Brethren appeared in the Nelson District Court yesterday charged with sex offences dating back more than 50 years.**

The 72-year-old Nelson man was facing six representative charges of indecent assault and one of inducing a girl to perform an indecent act. He entered no plea. The alleged offending spanned from 1951 to 1985, and related to four women, all of whom were former Exclusive Brethren members.

The women were aged five to 10 at the time.

The man's lawyer, Hamish Riddoch, asked Judge Tony Zohrab for interim name suppression until his client's next appearance on August 14.

The judge denied the request, but granted an interim order suppressing the man's identity until 5pm today to allow time to appeal against that decision.

Riddoch said he would be seeking a stay or discharge of the charges because the length of time since the most recent alleged offence would make a fair trial difficult. He said some disaffected members of the church had chosen to go public and there could be some prejudice against his client.

Police prosecutor Sergeant Graeme Eden opposed name suppression, saying the women would not be identified and publication of the man's name could prompt others to come forward.

The judge said it was known that there was a member of the Exclusive Brethren facing charges. The finger could be pointed at other members of the church if the name was not publicised, the judge said.

The man was remanded on bail until August 14.

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DAN HUTCHINSON/The Press

**COURT APPEARANCE:** A 72-year-old former Exclusive Brethren member makes his way from the Nelson District Court yesterday. He faces historical sex charges.

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- No, they should follow NZ's stance on the war.
- No, but we would carry soldiers of other nationalities.
- Yes, George W. Bush needs all the help he can get.
- I don't care. Air NZ can do what it wants.

