

Minister-professor sentenced for soliciting minor: Began with Internet contact

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A former religion professor at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania was sentenced June 1 for soliciting sex with what he believed were preteen girls. Saying the crime “cries out for incarceration,” Judge Scott A. Evans sentenced David B. Eller, 61, to two and a half to 10 years in state prison followed by five years of probation.

Eller, an ordained minister, tearfully hugged his wife before he was led away by sheriff’s deputies. She had told the judge she had forgiven her husband.

The chair of the college’s department of religious studies when he was arrested last July, Eller was quickly dismissed by the college. He was arrested when he arrived at a parking lot in Lower Paxton Township, Pennsylvania, to meet what he thought was a 12-year-old girl seeking a sexual encounter.

Instead, he met agents of the state attorney general’s office Child Predator Unit, who had been conversing online with Eller using four preteen identities.

He pleaded guilty in February to attempted unlawful contact with a minor and criminal use of a communications facility. More than 50 supporters packed the courtroom on Eller’s behalf, many from his congregation at the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren.

Eller said he is seeking counseling for a “sexual addiction” that had overtaken his life. He said the girl’s age was not in his mind and that he doesn’t know what he would have done if there had really been a girl there to meet him. He said he might have counseled her.

But Deputy Attorney General Anthony Forray said Eller still seemed to be rationalizing his actions. He reminded the judge that Eller was reaching out to four agents posing as 12- or 13-year-olds. In the chats, Eller talked of a girl performing

oral sex on him and vice versa.