

Athens area youth pastor faces 58 molestation charges

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The Winder youth minister who was charged with child molestation in Oconee County earlier this month now faces 58 additional charges related to child molestation in Barrow County.

Brian Richard Gray, 32, was arrested last month in Notasulga, Ala., shortly after Oconee County authorities filed charges of child molestation, statutory rape and burglary in connection to a relationship Gray had with a 16-year-old girl.

"Their relationship started in the youth group in Monroe in Walton County, but we found that the actual sexual acts took place in Barrow County," said Barrow County Sheriff Jud Smith. "We executed a search warrant on his house and found evidence that corroborated the fact that he brought her to his house."

The Barrow County Sheriff's Office charged Gray with 58 additional counts related to the same victim and arrested him last week after he posted \$50,000 bond to be released from the Oconee County Jail, Smith said.

Gray is held at the Barrow County Detention Center pending a bail hearing in Barrow County Superior Court, Smith said.

Gray was youth minister for the Monroe Church of Christ in Walton County, where the victim and her family are members, said Oconee Sheriff Scott Berry.

He started having sex with a girl from Oconee County beginning last December, when she was 15, and he continued the relationship through September, Berry said.

Barrow County authorities pressed charges because Gray allegedly drove the girl to his house at 1421 Langdon Park Court in Winder for sex on a number of occasions. Evidence showed he took her to his house for sex at least three times a week, according to Smith.

Investigators decided to file charges for every sexual encounter Gray had with the girl, according to Smith.

"There were several instances where he had taken the victim from Oconee County over to his home (in Winder) and that's where the alleged sexual contact occurred," Smith said. "There were several different instances that it occurred, and we took a charge for every time it happened."

The charges include 17 counts of child molestation, 17 counts of statutory rape, 17 counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes, two counts of aggravated sexual battery, four counts of sexual battery and one count of sodomy.

Investigators from Barrow and Oconee counties house searched Gray's home shortly before his arrest but Smith would not say what they found. Police do know that he had pictures of other girls from the youth group, according to Smith.

Only one other member of the youth group has come forward saying that she had sex with Gray but she was 17 at the time, which makes the encounter legal.

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