

# Orlando Sentinel



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## Ex-Baptist preacher re-arrested on child-rape charges

Similar charges against 55-year-old David Downs were dropped just last week.

September 23, 2013 | By Arelis R. Hernández, Orlando Sentinel

Nearly one month after the Orange-Osceola State Attorney's office decided not to pursue charges against a Baptist minister accused of molesting a child, state prosecutors are trying again.

David Rutherford Downs, 55, was re-arrested on Friday on a warrant charging him with two counts of sexual battery and six counts of lewd and lascivious conduct.

The charges stem from allegations that the former Chuluota pastor had inappropriate sexual contact with a child under the age of 12 after over the course of several years.

Downs was first arrested in July 2012 after a victim came forward to law enforcement saying she had been touched and battered by the preacher on numerous occasions throughout her childhood.

He stepped down as pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church after the charges surfaced. Church officials say he is no longer a member.

Downs was behind bars for several months fighting the charges in court until January, when a judge granted him bail.

His attorney, Tad Yates, fought to have the charges dismissed, claiming no one could corroborate the victim's testimony and she only levied the allegations to retaliate against Downs for another incident.

It is unclear why prosecutors dropped the charges in late August but court documents revealed the State had difficulty deposing the witnesses.

Nevertheless, they re-filed those charges last week and Downs is back in custody.

He is being held without bond at the Orange County Jail

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