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## Wake County pastor charged with taking indecent liberties with a minor

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Dalvis Steve Conerly

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RALEIGH — A pastor with a long career in three states has been accused of a sex offense involving a child.

Dalvis Steve Conerly, 62, was arrested and charged Saturday with two counts of taking indecent liberties with a child.

Conerly has been involved in churches and ministry throughout his adult life, according to his sister-in-law, Lou Conerly, of Alabama. He often goes by Steve Conerly, according to people who know him.

"I've known him since he was a boy," she said when told of the charges on Tuesday. "I am so sorry to hear that. To tell you the honest truth, I'm devastated."

Conerly is listed on the website of the New Beginnings Fellowship as a pastor. The church's address in southern Wake County, 2509 Banks Road, also is listed on the arrest warrant as Conerly's home address.

In an arrest warrant, Raleigh police said the offenses occurred between Feb. 2 and 4 and that the victim was under 16.

As is usual with such charges, the warrant stated only that police believed Conerly "did take and attempted to

take indecent liberties,” the language used in state law. State law says that the “liberties” must be “for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire.”

Conerly previously was a pastor at nearby Plymouth Church, from 2004 to 2005, before he left to form his own ministry, according to Chris Partin, Plymouth’s current pastor.

According to the New Beginnings website, Conerly has worked at churches in Mississippi, Virginia and North Carolina. He is a 1979 graduate of Campbell University in Buies Creek. His previous criminal record includes only traffic-related charges, according to a records check.

Patty Gibbs of Willow Spring worked with Conerly as a treasurer of New Beginnings Fellowship several years ago, she said. He was every part the pastor, she said.

“You shocked me,” she said when she learned of the arrest. “I can tell you that he was always very active with the youth. He never did anything inappropriate with my daughter.”

She was withholding judgment for now, she said, because she hadn’t seen any signs of illegal behavior during her time with Conerly.

Conerly is listed on one professional website as Dr. Dalvis Conerly, a licensed professional counselor with degrees from East Carolina University in 1992 and Drew University in 2001. The website, <http://therapists.psychologytoday.com>, says he has a doctoral degree in spiritual guidance.

Conerly was being held Tuesday at the Wake County Detention Center with bail set at \$50,000. His wife did not immediately return a call for comment placed to her listed number.

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