

Church member charged with illicit relations with teen

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WATERBURY — The small Christian church sits on the second floor of a building on Freight Street, above a used appliance shop that sells old stoves and near a bar with ads for cheap beers.

Inside the Iglesia Cristiana Fuente de Aqua Viva church, 43-year-old Miguel Torres, a married member of its congregation, befriended a 14-year-old girl, answering her questions about Bible scriptures and passing on his cell phone number in case she needed help.

That relationship spiraled into employing the teen to make child pornography when Torres had the girl send naked pictures and sexual videos of herself to his iPhone on multiple occasions, an arrest warrant obtained Tuesday shows.

Torres, who was arrested recently, is being held on a \$100,000 bond for charges that include employing a minor in an obscene performance. The warrant shows that Torres met the teen after her mother brought her and her sisters to the church where Torres's wife led the girls in youth studies.

After exchanging phone numbers with the girl, he chatted with her through text messages about Jesus Christ and religion. But Torres told police he thought the teen was "pretty and I started having feelings about having sex with her," according to his arrest warrant.

Torres instructed the teen to use coded language when talking about sexual topics during their text conversations and referred to himself as "PR." He asked

the girl for naked pictures and videos and then sent others of himself in return, the warrant shows.

"I remember he texted something like, 'those are mine and he didn't like sharing,'" the girl told police referring to the pictures. "He was like saying that my body parts are his."

The girl's mother eventually discovered the conversations when she took away her daughter's iPod Touch and gave it to police. Torres, who admitted to sending

a sexual video to the teen, also surrendered his cell phone to investigators.

Using a special forensic device, Detective Peter Morgan found nine videos of a nude girl, along with a video showing a man masturbating in the shower, which matched the girl's statement to police about her exchanges with Torres.

The teen told police the exchanges didn't lead to physical encounters with Torres.

Pastor Francisco Baez, a church leader, said Torres was a member of the church for four or five years, while his wife is an official there. Baez said he was surprised by the arrest, but the church hasn't changed the way it operates.

"When I see it, I can't believe it," Baez said.

The alleged contact didn't involve the church's computers, he said.

Torres's attorney, Leonard Crone, said he was still investigating the case and couldn't comment until the probe is complete.

"We're doing the things we need to do to defend Mr. Torres," he said.

Torres is due in Waterbury Superior Court in early October.



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