

ALABAMA: Pastor Arrested For Raping 14-Year-Old Family Member Inside His Own Church For 3 Years

Written by WSFA 12 News Staff
Thursday, 10 April 2014 16:01

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DALLAS COUNTY, AL (WSFA) -



DALLAS COUNTY, AL (WSFA) - Pastor William Best, Living Waters Worship Center, was arrested and charged with multiple sex crimes against an underage family member

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A Dallas County pastor who was arrested and charged with multiple sex crimes appeared in a Selma courtroom for his arraignment Thursday.

The suspect, 47-year-old William Best, was brought into the courtroom with his head down around 1:30 p.m. His hands and feet were shackled.

Best is accused of raping an underage family member, according to Dallas County Sheriff Harris Huffman Jr. He's charged with second degree rape, second degree sodomy and incest.

His bond, initially set at \$250,000, was increased to \$2 million at Thursday's court appearance. District Attorney Michael Jackson said he believes this is the highest bond ever in Dallas County for these types of charges.

"Some things came out in the case we felt warranted a substantial increase," Jackson said.

The district attorney added that additional charges are possible.

District Attorney Michael Jackson says the 47-year-old minister is accused of beginning a sexual relationship with a minor who was 14 and continuing it for three years. He said the minister is accused of abusing the minor at his home and at the church.

A preliminary hearing was set for May 20. At that time a judge will look at the evidence and decide if there's enough to turn the case over to a grand jury.

After the hearing Best had nothing to say when questioned by WSFA 12 News reporter Bryan Henry.

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Vaughan Russell is the court-appointed attorney for the former pastor. Russell declined to give a lengthy comment about his client's case except to say Best is "devastated" and "worried about his family."

Best was arrested without incident Tuesday. He's being held in the Dallas County Jail.

He had been the pastor at Living Waters Worship Center in Valley Grande for three years, according to the sheriff.

The chairman of the church's board of directors, Rick Barrett, said Best was promptly fired after his arrest Tuesday. The vote was unanimous.

Huffman said the alleged sexual activity happened over the last three years at the church and Best's house. The victim told her mother about the most recent incident on Saturday. That's when the mother contacted the sheriff's department.

Huffman said investigators confiscated a computer and other physical evidence from Best's office at the church.

The sign outside Living Waters Worship Center Wednesday afternoon had a message that said: "Pray for our church - God will see us through."

Barrett said Best came highly recommended to the church from Fayette, AL. He added that the church is devastated, shocked and angry. Barrett said this isn't what the church is about, and they are a congregation of loving, caring people.

Best's prior record includes minor traffic violations

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<http://www.wsfa.com/story/25205947/hearing-being-held-for-dallas-co-pastor-charged-with-multiple-sex-crimes>