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Minister charged with child abuse could return to prison

By Andrew Dys

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The York County minister arrested last week on three child abuse-related charges could face a return to federal prison, where he served seven years for stealing millions in a religious investment scam.

Federal prosecutors who proved The Rev. Johnny William "Bill" Cabe swindled churchgoers out of more than \$8 million have confirmed they know Cabe was arrested on new charges.

They have not said, however, whether the federal government will seek to terminate Cabe's supervised release - the federal equivalent of probation.

"We are aware of it," said Dean Eichelberger, the assistant U.S. Attorney who prosecuted Cabe and three others in the 2001 HisWay Ministries scam, of the pending charges against Cabe.

Eichelberger declined to comment on whether federal prosecutors would seek to terminate Cabe's three-year term of supervised release. That release, ordered by the judge when he was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2001, began after he left prison in July 2008, according to both federal prosecutors and the U.S. District Court clerk's office.

After Cabe - pastor at Riverside Independent Baptist Church in Rock Hill - was arrested last week, a federal prisons spokesman told The Herald he was not on supervised release.

Under the conditions of supervised release, a defendant cannot violate any local, state or federal laws, Eichelberger said. Prosecutors would have to show a preponderance of the evidence in a court hearing - a standard of proof lower than what's needed for a criminal conviction - to terminate Cabe's release, he said.

Cabe, 50, was convicted on 26 counts of taking more than \$8 million from investors in a scheme that brought convictions upon another pastor from Gastonia, N.C., and two other swindlers from England.

Cabe also was fined \$7.8 million. Federal authorities seized about \$1.2 million after his conviction and paid back some of the investors, Eichelberger said.

Cabe has been paying off some of the remaining fine to a total of almost \$2 million since 2001, said Beth Drake, a spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Cabe has had regular meetings with federal probation officials since he was released from prison, Drake said, but she was unclear if Cabe has met with federal authorities since his Aug. 24 arrest.

Cabe, who lives in York, was released on \$12,000 bond Aug. 24 on state charges of unlawfully practicing medicine, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and committing a lewd act on a child under 16.

York County sheriff's deputies allege Cabe illegally touched an 11-year-old boy and gave the boy a cell phone communication card after a caretaker cut off communication between Cabe and the alleged victim, arrest warrants claim.

Cabe could not be reached for comment Friday.

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