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NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

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PREACHER FACES NEW CHARGE OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Associated Press

A Baptist preacher who was granted a new trial last week on a charge of fondling an 8-year-old girl in foster care faces three new charges of sexual abuse.

Hillcrest Baptist Church pastor **William Nathan White** is accused of molesting a 9-year-old boy, a girl who told authorities she was raped twice in churches and a former foster child, 13, who told investigators that White started molesting her at age 9.

Charles Fantl, White's attorney, denied the new charges. He said the children were molested by others but they blame White.

White, of Mascotte, was charged Tuesday with three counts of sexual battery of a child under age 12. He was being held in the Lake County Jail without bond. He faces life in prison if convicted.

He also was charged with five counts of lewd and lascivious acts, which carry up to 15 years' in prison for each count.

Earlier Tuesday, Circuit Judge T. Michael Johnson set bond at \$30,000 for White on the previous charge without knowledge of the new ones. But another judge at a later hearing refused to set bail.

White was convicted in July of fondling an 8-year-old girl left in his care. A retrial was granted because of jury misconduct. The jury foreman told other jurors that White faced similar charges in another case.

White could face up to 15 years' in prison if he is found guilty in a new trial. A trial date has not been set.

White was acquitted in August on charges of fondling two other foster children, two sisters who were 10 and 11 at the time of the alleged incident in December 1998.

State records show that White and his wife, Susan, were licensed foster parents who had taken in at least 20 children since 1995.

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