

Six Charismatic Ministries Under Investigation

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The U.S. Senate Finance Committee has begun an exploratory review of possible financial misuse of six prominent charismatic ministries. This week Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley, the ranking Republican member on the committee, sent letters to six major TV ministries requesting that they yield detailed financial records by Dec. 6. The detailed four- to six-page letters, which were all posted on the *Tampa Tribune's* Web site, stated that the Senate Finance Committee requested a review of each ministry's fiscal reports to determine whether the nonprofits were operating in compliance with their tax-exempt status. The ministries included in the investigation are: Randy and Paula White of Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Fla.; Benny Hinn of World Healing Center Church of Grapevine, Texas; David and Joyce Meyer of Joyce Meyer Ministries in Fenton, Mo.; Kenneth and Gloria Copeland of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Newark, Texas; Bishop Eddie Long of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga.; and Creflo and Taffi Dollar of World Changers Church International in College Park, Ga. The ministries were asked to submit an assortment of information including the salaries of the ministries' top staff, amounts received from "love offerings," and accounts of ministry expenses related to cars, jets, vacations and recording studios. Some of the ministries have released response statements to the investigation. Joyce Meyer Ministries (JMM) said on its Web site that JMM has always been "transparent" about their financial dealings, noting that their 2003 to 2006 audits are posted on their Web site and that the IRS's recent ministry audit determined the ministry should retain its nonprofit status. "JMM is committed to conducting itself with excellence and integrity, choosing to go above and beyond the level of accountability required by

law and/or that expected by most donors," said Thomas J. Winters, the ministry's attorney.