

People

News in the [April 6, 2010](#) issue

TV evangelist **Benny Hinn** has written a letter to his supporters saying his wife of three decades, Suzanne, had “no biblical grounds” for filing for divorce on February 1. Hinn said he did not learn of the filing until 16 days later, when he heard from her lawyer. A Pentecostal faith healer and a fixture on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, Hinn was one of six ministry leaders investigated by the Senate Finance Committee for questionable finances. Hinn vowed that his troubled family life would not keep him from his ministry. “I am going to continue preaching the gospel and praying for the sick as I have for 36 years,” he said. “I will not allow anything to slow me down or stop me.”

Donald E. Wildmon, the founder and chairman of the Mississippi-based American Family Association, has resigned after months of failing health, said the conservative Christian ministry, known for its boycotts of Disney, PepsiCo and other companies whose social policies the organization opposed. “A bite from a mosquito carrying the St. Louis encephalitis virus caused Wildmon’s illness,” the ministry said on March 3. Wildmon, 72, also was treated for cancer on his left eye. The retired United Methodist minister started the ministry in 1977. It operates 180 radio stations and a monthly magazine. The AFA said Wildmon’s son, Tim, 47, who has worked for AFA for the past 24 years, is expected to lead the ministry.

Iris V. Cully, 95, a pioneering woman in religious education, died February 24 in Claremont, California, according to a family spokesperson. In 1955, she was the first woman to receive a doctorate in religion from Northwestern University and in 1965 she was the first woman to join the faculty of Yale Divinity School. Cully was the first female president of the Association of Theological Schools, serving 1973–74 in that post. In 1976, she was given an endowed professorship at Lexington Theological Seminary, a Disciples-related school from where she retired in 1985. Her husband, Kendig, who was a pastor and academician, died in 1987 while the couple was coediting the *Harper Encyclopedia of Religious Education*. She completed the work on the book three years later. Among her own books was *Education for Spiritual Growth* (1984), which examined both Western and Eastern Christianity and other religions, and *The Bible in Christian Education* (1995).

South African theologian **Steve de Gruchy**, 48, who has been hailed as a pioneer in church activism and economic and ecological justice, died in a tubing accident on the Mooi River in South Africa. His body was recovered February 24. During the apartheid era, he was active in student protests at the University of Cape Town. He was also a signatory of the Kairos Document, which declared apartheid a heresy. He was professor of theology and development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Active in international ecumenical bodies, he was editor since 2003 of the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. He is the son of theologian John de Gruchy.