

Ice Bucket Challenge Tempts Christian Celebrities

Casting Crowns' Mark Hall, best-selling author John Maxwell, actress Candace Cameron Bure, and literary agent Chip MacGregor are just a few of the hundreds of Christian authors, agents, artists and other personalities joining the ALS "Ice Bucket Challenge" and posting their videos on Facebook, Instagram and other social-media sites.

The celebs join tens of, if not hundreds of, thousands of people who have participated to date by having buckets of ice water dumped onto their heads in order to bring awareness to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

In Hall's video, the singer asks what the challenge stands for, and when told that he either gets ice water on his head or has to give \$100 toward researching a cure for ALS, he quickly states that he has \$100 on him and can avoid the ice-water bucket. However, the teens in the pickup truck bed behind him quickly soak the singer anyway. Hall then proceeds to call out singers Matthew West and Jeremy Camp to take the challenge.

Teaching pastor and author Bo Stern of Bend, Oregon, has experienced the devastating effects of ALS close to home, as her husband Steve was diagnosed with the disease in 2011. She says the challenge has gotten more people talking about the horrifying disease that many knew little about.

"We humans need to associate things with people—it's easier that way," Stern wrote in a blog post Aug. 19 that has been shared over 800,000 times. "That's why the celebrity faces and personal challenges happening in the ice bucket challenge are so effective at bringing in money. And if someone gets to

look good while plunking their \$50 in the ALS tip jar, I have zero problem with that.”

While the Ice Bucket videos seem like everyone is just having fun for a good cause, some pro-life Christians are calling for donations to be made to other charities than just the ALS Association, saying that the charity uses its funding for embryonic stem-cell research. In this kind of research, human embryos are destroyed.

“Adult stem cell research is important and should be done alongside embryonic stem-cell research as both will provide valuable insights,” states Lucie Bruijn, Ph.D., The ALS Association’s senior vice president of Research and Development, in “A Primer on Stem Cells” page featured on the ALS website. “Only through exploration of all types of stem cell research will scientists find the most efficient and effective ways to treat diseases.”

Catholic leaders Rev. Michael F. Duffy and Deacon Greg Kandra blogged about the stem-cell research last week in posts that went viral, and some believers on Facebook and other social media sites are taking the challenge but noting that they are donating funds to other charitable organizations.

Former President George W. Bush took the challenge and stated in his video that he didn’t think it was very presidential to get ice water dumped on his head and would just write a check. However, First Lady Laura Bush proceeded to douse the ex-president anyway, saying the check would be from her, so she did not have to ruin her hairdo. Bush then challenged former President Clinton, humorously stating that it was recently Clinton’s birthday, and Bush’s present to him was a bucket of cold water. Other notable celebs who participated recently include Oprah, Justin Bieber, Ben Affleck and wife Jennifer Garner, and Taylor Swift.

As of Wednesday, The ALS Association reported receiving \$94.3

million in donations since the Ice Bucket Challenge went viral, compared to \$2.7 million during the same three-week period last year (July 29 to Aug. 27). The donations came from both existing donors and 2.1 million new donors to the association.