

Shining the Light of Jesus in Hollywood's Darkness

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Most made-for-TV Christmas movies are like eggnog and sugar cookies—way too sweet, yet extremely addictive for a lot of viewers. But these Hallmark-style movies—the ones with predictable love stories that always end with jingling bells and a happy wedding—have suddenly become divisive in our polarized culture.

At the heart of this controversy is actress Candace Cameron Bure, an outspoken Christian actress who is taking a bold stand for traditional family values.

Most people know Bure for her role in the TV sitcom “Full House,” which ran from 1987 to 1995. Many people don’t know that after Bure got married, she took about 10 years off from her acting career to raise her three children. She then reemerged on The Hallmark Channel, where she appeared in 30 movies, many of them with a Christmas theme. Her film “Moonlight and Mistletoe” is still listed as Hallmark’s highest rated movie.

But Bure left Hallmark after the network’s CEO, Bill Abbott, broke from the channel in 2021 to launch the Texas-based Great American Family (GAF), a TV network devoted to making faith-based, family-friendly movies. Abbott’s departure happened after Hallmark began airing LGBTQ advertising. GAF began premiering its Christmas movies on Oct. 21, and Bure’s first Christmas film on the channel, “A Christmas ... Present,” aired on Nov. 27.

Some people in the gay community have condemned Bure as a homophobic prude because she doesn’t want to be involved in supporting or producing gay-themed romantic films. After she

left Hallmark, one LGBTQ publication known as Queerty ran this headline: "Candace Cameron Bure to Launch Crappy TV Channel That Tells Stories of 'Traditional' Marriage.'"

Bure, who is now 46, is no stranger to public debate. She served as the conservative antagonist on the liberal-leaning talk show *The View* for two seasons, from 2015 to 2016. But she says now that she never wants to be on a political talk show again. She prefers acting as well as producing wholesome family entertainment.

"My heart wants to tell stories that have more meaning and purpose and depth behind them," Bure told *The Wall Street Journal* last month. "I knew that the people behind *Great American Family* were Christians that love the Lord and wanted to promote faith programming and good family entertainment."

Bure also said that Hallmark "basically is a completely different network than when I started because of the change of leadership." That has been confirmed by new Hallmark CEO Wonya Lucas, who told reporters recently that a "seismic" change is coming to Hallmark programming. The network has pledged to make more gay-themed movies and to include more LGBTQ characters.

I hope you will pray for Bure, who will need thick skin and fierce courage as she works hard to produce wholesome entertainment in a culture that is increasingly intolerant of anything clean and family-friendly.

Thankfully Bure is not alone. Even though Hollywood films seem to be getting darker, bloodier and more sexually explicit, there is a growing movement among Christian actors and filmmakers to provide faith-based content for viewers who are tired of "woke" movies. Bure's own brother, actor Kirk Cameron, just released "*Lifemark*," a Christian film about adoption that was produced by the makers of "*Fireproof*" and "*War Room*."

Also in the works: Director Mel Gibson will bring “The Passion of the Christ: Resurrection” to theaters in June 2023. Actor Jim Caviezel will reprise his role as Jesus in this sequel, which will focus on the events of the book of Acts. The original film made \$623 million globally.

Meanwhile, the creators of “The Chosen” series just released a big-screen version of the first two episodes of the popular show’s third season. When the episodes were shown in theaters the weekend of Nov. 16, “The Chosen” made more than \$14.5 million at the box office globally, outpacing several big Hollywood films including “Black Adam,” “Ticket to Paradise” and “She Said.”

Mainstream TV and film producers are scratching their heads as they watch the success of “The Chosen.” It already has the distinction of being the #1 most crowd-funded entertainment project of all time, and episodes from the first two seasons have gained more than 420 million views. The third season will begin streaming on Dec. 11.

I’m expecting to see more wholesome and faith-based options coming to both television and movie theaters in the near future. People are getting tired of perversion, profanity, gory violence and sleaze being forced on them on both the big and small screen.

It seems a quiet revolution is coming to entertainment. Pray for Candace Cameron Bure, Kirk Cameron, the makers of “The Chosen” and all Christians who are seeking to be lights in the darkness of Hollywood.

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