Written by **Dave Bohon** on August 21, 2014

Pro-Life Leaders: ALS "Ice Bucket Challenge" May Fund Killing of Babies

You've seen it in the news and it's been all the rage on Facebook over the past week or two. People are taking the ALS "Ice Bucket Challenge," which boils down to having a bucket of ice-cold water poured over one's head to raise funds for the ALS Association, which has the stated mission of fighting the deadly malady commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Everyone from local city officials to national celebrities and notables — such as former president George W. Bush, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and Oprah Winfrey, to name just a few — have participated in the good-natured challenge to raise, to date, nearly $32 million for ALS research. Most of that money has been ponied up by young people only too happy to video-record each other having some fun while raising money for what appears to be a worthy cause.

But over the past few days pro-life leaders have raised a red flag over the funding stunt, warning that in the midst of all its research and high-profile battling of the deadly disease, the ALS Association is also committed to embryonic stem-cell research — wherein scientists uses the cells of aborted babies in a supposed attempt to find cures for diseases such as multiple sclerosis and ALS.

LifeSiteNews.com and the American Life League noted that in response to a query concerning the ALS Association's position on embryonic stem-cell research, a spokesperson admitted that while the organization "primarily funds adult stem cell research," it is also "funding one study using embryonic stem cells (ESC)."

In a commentary published by LifeNews.com, bioethics writer Rebecca Taylor noted that last year the ALS Association reported that it had given $500,000 to Northeast ALS Consortium (NEALS), reported to be the largest association of ALS clinical researchers in the world. "Likely, the ALS Association will give more to NEALS this year with the popularity of the Ice Bucket Challenge," predicted Taylor.

Taylor wrote that on the NEALS website she discovered at least one research project "that clearly states it uses stem cells that originated from an electively aborted fetus."

The description of the research trial, funded by NeuralStem Inc., states that the "stem cells have been engineered from the spinal cord of a single fetus electively aborted after eight weeks of gestation. The tissue was obtained with the mother's consent."

Of course, noted Taylor, the pre-born baby who was killed and whose cells were taken for the research, "did not 'give consent.'"

Taylor warned that "if you give to the ALS Association your money may end up supporting clinical trials that use aborted fetal cells. Even if the money is not directly going to facilitate such research, it will be going to organizations that see no problem in using aborted innocents as biological material for medical use. That legitimizes and encourages the practice which is unacceptable in my estimation."

The American Family Association's Kevin McCullough emphasized that the funding of embryonic stem-cell research "means that children are created and at their earliest stages of life they are destroyed so that the stem cells (from usually the base of the brain) can be harvested to perform tests with."

McCullough pointed out that beyond murdering a human being for medical study, "embryonic stem cell research has proven zero percent effective in combating diseases like ALS and other neurological degenerative diseases." On the other hand, he added, adult stem cells — which are harvested from living humans without killing them — have proven "vastly effective in making progress towards slowing down and in some cases seeing remission or reversal of degenerative defects."

The revelation about the ALS Association's connection to embryonic stem-cell research has prompted pro-life and religious leaders to speak out. "It is noble to combat a deadly disease, and the ice bucket challenge definitely puts a fun spin on philanthropic efforts," said Lila Rose of the pro-life group Live Action. "That's why it's such a shame that the ALS Association, while striving to save some people, chooses to support research that thrives from experimenting on and killing tiny, innocent human beings."

Rose declared that embryonic stem-cell research "is inherently unethical and a violation of fundamental human rights, and even materialists must admit that promises of its benefits have failed to deliver. There is no good reason to condone this practice; in fact, all it does is taint the ALS Association, whom I'd otherwise be happy to support."

At least one Catholic archdiocese has publicly pointed out the troubling relationship between the ALS Association and groups involved in embryonic stem-cell research. Cincinnati.com reported that the Archdiocese of Cincinnati "has asked the principals at its Catholic schools not to encourage students to raise money for the ALS Association as the ice-bucket challenge becomes an internet sensation."

A spokesman for the diocese said in a prepared statement that "we appreciate the compassion that has caused so many people to engage in [the bucket challenge]. But it's a well established moral principle that a good end is not enough. The means to that end must be morally licit."

According to Cincinnati.com, the archdiocese requested "that any money raised is sent instead to the John Paul II Medical Research Institute in Iowa City, Iowa, where the research is only conducted using adult stem cells."

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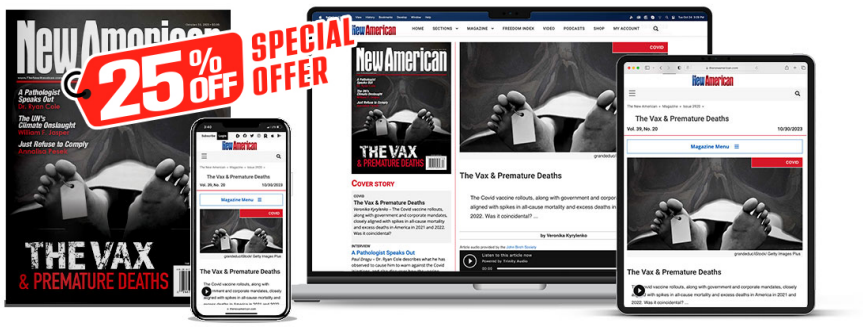

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