

Has Oscar Lost Its Raison D'être?

One thing became clear watching the 86th annual Oscars ceremony Sunday. Most of the winners—and most of the nominees—were the same people and movies nominated and chosen by the Independent Spirit Awards, the awards show for independent movies.

If the Oscars are going to pick the same things as the independent awards show, why even have an Oscars ceremony at all?

Are these movies really the best movies of the year? No. Few of them are the kind of movies the vast majority of moviegoers has any interest in seeing, judging by box office numbers.

That said, there were a few good picks among the winners. The best one, of course, was *Frozen* as the best animated feature. Movieguide picked *Frozen* as the best 2013 movie for families, but why wasn't *Frozen* also nominated for best picture?

Second, it was good to see *Gravity* taking most of the technical, artistic awards, including best director. Of course, if *Gravity* deserved those awards, why wasn't it chosen as best picture of the year over *12 Years a Slave*?

Movieguide also approved the pick of *Twenty Feet From Stardom* as best documentary. Singer Darlene Love's moving performance of "His Eyes Are on the Sparrow" during the acceptance speech gave the telecast a needed "tent revival" spiritual boost. Matthew McConaughey's recognition of God during his acceptance speech was another highlight.

Ellen DeGeneres was much better than last year's host, though she wasn't always on her game. Her selfie photos with the stars and her pizza-delivery schtick gave the show some

spontaneity, but after a while her forays into the audience began to grow a little stale.

Otherwise, the show was poorly produced. It played rather slowly. Except for Idina Menzel, who belted out "Let It Go" from Disney's *Frozen*, the music was flat in places. Also, the retrospective collages lacked drama, were badly edited and seemed rather pointless.

Despite some politically correct moments, the show was relatively family friendly. There was still the odd lewd joke, and Ellen seemed to treat Liza Minnelli, the daughter of Judy Garland, rather poorly with a tasteless, mean joke about female impersonators (maybe Liza has refused to appear on Ellen's daytime talk show).

Of course, if you want to see the best awards show of the whole season, look no further than Movieguide's one-hour edited version of the 22nd annual Faith and Values Awards gala and report to the entertainment industry on the ReelzChannel. Our production and editing team produced one of the best, most-well-paced awards shows in recent memory, if we do say so ourselves.

The best part is that this year's Movieguide Awards contains truly inspirational references to faith and family throughout the telecast, with powerful testimonies from stars like Willie Robertson of *Duck Dynasty*, Roma Downey of *The Bible* miniseries, and James Denton and AJ Michalka of *Grace Unplugged*.