

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Critiquing a Critic

(Jerry Fite)

The famous film critic, Roger Ebert has written his memoir entitled, *Life Itself*. In it, he has a chapter titled, “How I Believe in God”. His view of the modern church scene is, “*I have no interest in mega-churches with jocular millionaire pastors. I think what happens in them is sociopolitical, not spiritual.*”

His insight to spirituality is commendable, but his spiritual concepts are definitely not all Scriptural because he also writes, “*I have no patience for churches that evangelize aggressively. I have no interest in being instructed in what must I do to be saved.*” Mr. Ebert would have no interest in the church revealed in New Testament Scripture. For the church of Christ and the Spirit guided apostles were aggressive in evangelizing the world. Jesus, before his ascension, instructed His apostles to “*go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*” (Mark 16:15-16). Going into all the

world is an aggressive proposition. Jesus’ listing of the possible responses to the gospel message shows Jesus was interested in the question, “what must I do to be saved”.

The apostles were aggressive in evangelism in that it was their daily activity. “*And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ*” (Acts 5:42). Peter and Paul definitely did not hesitate to answer those who asked, “What must I do to be saved?” for fear of being too aggressive, or leading one on who is asking an unimportant, unnecessary or unspiritual question. Peter guided those who asked, “*Sirs, what shall we do?*” with “*repent ye and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins. . .*” (Acts 2:37-38). Paul responded to the jailer’s question, “*What must I do to be saved?*” with “*believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. . .*” (Acts 16:30-31).

How can one in tune with the heart of Jesus be ambivalent to

that which is close to His heart? “*For the son of man came to seek to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). Seeking is an aggressive action. The lost being saved demands an answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The apostles were not aggressive “in your face preachers” using “pressuring tactics”, but they were “at your door evangelists” offering the “persuasive Gospel.”

Like many in our society today, Mr. Ebert looks at spirituality in his own terms. He refuses to put a label on his spirituality. “*I am not a believer, not an atheist, not an agnostic. I am more content with questions than with answers.*” Mr. Ebert seems to want to meander in his spiritual journey thinking more of his complicated questions to the important matters of life, instead of being satisfied with God’s distinctive answers. Mr. Ebert is not the first more interested in questions than answers. Paul warned Timothy of those who are “*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (2 Timothy 3:7). Sadly, spirituality is no longer anchored in the Word.