After success of “Fireproof” last year, Liberal Ministerial Alliance hopes this movie will be even more popular with local citizens

By JESSICA CRAWFORD

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This day and age, movies appropriate for the entire family are few and far between. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to relax with the family and enjoy a movie without once having to cover the eyes of any children present?

The Liberal Ministerial Alliance has found just that movie, “The Secrets of Johnathan Sperry,” with the help of the relationship recently formed by Dr. Jack Jacob, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, and Five and Two Pictures.

“We got information about the movie two ways,” Jacob said. “First, I have worked with Five and Two Pictures in the past on their movie ‘Timechanger.’ Because of this, Rich Christiano, the director and producer calls me when he has a new project out. Second, because First Southern Baptist Church brought in ‘Fireproof’ last year, and we had thousands of people see it in Liberal – we have hit the radar for the Christian movie companies. They contacted us about the possibility of bringing the ‘The Secrets of Johnathan Sperry’ to town.”

In an effort to bring out as many people as possible, Jacob approached the LMA with the prospect of sponsoring the film as a group.

“Last year, First Southern Baptist Church brought ‘Fireproof’ to town, but this time we wanted to give the Liberal Ministerial Alliance a chance to bring a film to town so that many more people would have a chance to go,” he said. “Sometimes, people see something being put on by a specific church and they hesitate to go because they do not attend that church and feel that they are betraying their own church or might be seen as disloyal. Because of that, we pitched the idea to the LMA through a series of pre-screening dinner theaters and they got excited about it, so all of the evangelical churches of Liberal that participate in LMA are bringing it to town.”

The process of bringing such a film to Liberal was not easy, especially considering when the film “The Secrets of Johnathan Sperry,” actually hit select theaters in September – when Liberal’s theater was closed for construction.

“First, they contacted us and told us we would have to pay $2,000 up front to bring the movie here and then they would give us 15 percent of tickets sales above that,” he said. “I watched the movie and saw its potential to reach the whole family and took it to my church and asked if we wanted to do it or if we wanted to involve LMA to get a broader audience. First Southern agreed we should do this to help build bridges between churches of LMA. Next, we showed the movie to pastors and church leaders of LMA in a dinner theater at First Southern. They all saw the impact of the film on them personally and got enthusiastically behind it.

“The Southgate Theater sold at that time and shut down, so we had to wait for them to reopen,” he continued. “When they reopened, we had to convince the movie company that we could still make it a go in Liberal and they finally agreed. We had to promise to buy 400 tickets and to promote the film – which we have. We have commitments from the churches of LMA for nearly 500 tickets and more requests are coming in every day. The theater owner, Brian Mitchell, has been very gracious and has even given us a price break if tickets are purchased through LMA.

Jacob said the movie will relate to viewers much like the television series “The Wonder Years” that ran from 1988 to 1993.

“It is the story of three boys that are friends in the 70s,” Jacob said. “They are just beginning to notice girls, have to put up with the town bully and meet a new friend that teaches them lessons about the Bible that they had never encountered in Sunday School. Along the way, they have to learn to speak to girls, understand people and forgive. There are twists and turns along the way right up to the very end of the film. It is a great story for the whole family.”

Jacob said individuals from every walk of life will come away from the film with a renewed sense of hope.

“Families can go to the movie and come away with greater love and appreciation for one another,” he said. “Church groups can go and come away with a deeper sense of loving each other. Singles can go and learn about the difficulties of family life. Couples can go and come away with a profound appreciation for their relationship. Kids can go and come away with a better understanding of what their parents have been trying to teach them about loving others. Anyone that has ever struggled with forgiving someone or being forgiven can come away greatly impacted.”

“The Secrets of Jonathan Sperry” will be opening Friday in Liberal and run for one week. Jacob said specific discounts will be available when tickets are purchased from the LMA.

“If the tickets are purchased through LMA, they are $5,” he said. “If a child uses the ticket or if the ticket is used for a matinee showing before 6 p.m., the person will also receive a $2 credit towards concessions – but must be used that day. The tickets are good for any showing throughout the week, but we are encouraging people to go Friday and Saturday, especially as this affects how the movie theater owner will look at the success of the film.

“Tickets can be purchased from LMA by picking them up from the First Southern Baptist Church office Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,” he added. “Or you can pick them up at your local church if they are participating with LMA in the movie.”