

The Baptist COURIER

Vol. 137, Issue No. 4

Informing and Inspiring South Carolina Baptists

February 24, 2005

Wristband enables Florence church to witness of God's love for all

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Members of First Baptist Church, Florence, are reaching out to their community and overseas by wearing a little blue rubber wristband that says, "Love God Love All."

A paraphrase of the Great Commandment found in Mark 12:30-34, the wristband has become a huge ministry tool. Kevin Qualls, senior pastor of First Baptist, said, "People are sharing the gospel like they never have before."

The "Love God Love All" concept originated when Qualls started a 12-week series on the Ten Commandments and was looking for a way to tie in the Great Commandment.

While he was discussing the upcoming series with John Gilman, a member at First Baptist, Gilman suggested using wristbands.

"When John came up with 'Love God Love All' as the inscription for a wristband, I said 'That's it. That is the Great Commandment summed up,'" explained Qualls.



A church member shares the "Love God Love All" wristband.

When Qualls began his 12-week series on the Ten Commandments, the church ordered 3,000 wristbands. On the first Sunday, they passed out around 500. By the end of the week, they had given all of them away.

Once the first 3,000 ran out, the church ordered 3,000 more. In a matter of five weeks, First Baptist gave out 6,000 "Love God Love All" wristbands.

"These wristbands are so conversational and make it easy to share the gospel. People come up and ask what the blue bands stand for, and we tell them 'Love God Love All.' Then we share Mark 12:30," said Qualls.

First Baptist has since ordered an additional 6,000 bands, including a camouflage version to send

to troops in Iraq.

Steve Grady, who works for the Department of Defense in Iraq, received a wristband from a member of First Baptist, and he was able to witness to a man in Dubai. While he was going through the screening process, one of the screeners asked him for a "Love God Love All" wristband. Grady had some extra ones in his bag, and gave him one.

"I asked him if he knew what it said, and he said, 'Love God Love All,' and I said, 'Yes, if you love God, you will love all.' He said, 'I love God, thank you' and put on the wristband," Grady recalled.

"I don't know if he was Muslim or what faith he may be, but I do know there was a seed planted, and there is a man in Dubai walking around with a 'Love God Love All' wristband," said Grady.

Churches in Missouri, Virginia, Georgia, North and South Carolina have recently contacted First Baptist, Florence, about starting the "Love God Love All" series.

For information on bringing this innovative series to your church, or to find out more, visit Love God Love All at www.lovegodloveall.com.