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# RELIGION

## Do you have the time?

Citywide campaign challenges people to listen to excerpts of the Bible for 40 days

BY PATRICK DUNN  
For the Journal

**R**io West Community Church pastor Don Schlichte hopes you'll make the Bible a daily part of your life.

If you need a little reminder or encouragement, there are at least six other West Side churches presenting a similar message and 142 total in the Albuquerque metro area — all supported by a citywide campaign with billboards, a Web site, radio advertising and television commercials featuring local pastors.

The united emphasis is all part of a yearlong program called "You've Got the Time Albuquerque," launched by Faith Comes By Hearing, an Albuquerque-based ministry that produces and distributes audio Bibles internationally.

"Basically, 'You've Got the Time' makes it simple and easy for anyone in our city to engage in and know the Bible," said Troy Carl, spokesman for Faith Comes by Hearing.

Carl said the idea for the campaign was sparked by statistics showing a steady decrease in Bible literacy both in the church and unchurched.

According to Carl, "You've Got the Time" was funded entirely by local business and church leaders and will serve as a pilot for future campaigns planned in the top 25 metro areas nationally.

A focal point of "You've Got the Time" is a Bible listening program, rather than traditional Bible reading.

"We are challenging people to listen to the New Testament 28 minutes each day, for 40 days," Carl said.

To facilitate this, the min-

istry is giving away free audio New Testaments in MP3 format on their Web site, [www.Faithcomesbyhearing.com](http://www.Faithcomesbyhearing.com). The Bibles can be downloaded to individual computers, burned to CD or loaded onto portable MP3 players. Multiple languages are available, along with a children's version.

"With the MP3 versions, people can listen at their computer, while driving, during family dinner time, jogging — it's really up to the families and individuals," Schlichte said. "I think this will really help get people to listen and consider the Bible, plus it's very relevant to our culture."

### Local participation

Churches like Rio West will give away audio New Testaments on special dates throughout the year and launch a 40-day listening challenge within their own congregation. Carl said distribution days include Easter, Lent, Mother's Day and Father's Day and Christmas.

Those churches that began the program in January are Legacy Church, Family Worship Center, Rio West Community Church, Praise & Worship Center, Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, Covenant Life Community Church and Our Savior Lutheran Church, according to information from Faith Comes by Hearing.

Churches that have participated in the past are First Baptist of West Albuquerque, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Rio Rancho Seventh Day Adventist Church, and Rio Rancho United Methodist Church.

According to Carl, 22 denominations across Albu-

querque are participating in "You've Got the Time."

"This campaign isn't built around a particular group or personality, it's just the Bible — something we can all agree that we all need," Carl said. "So we've been able to bring churches from all denominations to willfully and joyfully participate."

Schlichte said he first heard about "You've Got the Time" through Rio West members who work for Faith Comes by Hearing. Plus last fall he invited Morgan Jackson, the ministry's international director to speak at the church. The presentation included the impact Bible listening has made on a global scale.

"We were more than willing to participate after seeing what it has done in other cultures," Schlichte said.

While churches are helping to carry out the program, Carl hopes local congregations will also benefit.

"The churches are going to be the thrust of the campaign, but we also designed 'You've Got the Time' to strengthen the church," Carl said. "We're hoping it will impact the community in general, touching people in their personal life and leading them to a local church where they will plug in."

Schlichte said Rio West's 40-day challenge kicks off this Sunday, but he spent the last four weeks preparing his congregation through special sermons, while helping some members get up to speed technologically.

"We want everybody to participate — we're shooting for 100 percent," Schlichte said. "I know people are thinking about it and some have jumped the gun and are



DEAN HANSON/JOURNAL

**Don Schlichte, senior pastor of Rio West Community Church in Rio Rancho, is supporting a city-wide campaign to make the Bible a part of people's daily life.**

already listening."

Schlichte is using the "You've Got the Time" program as a springboard for an additional challenge to his congregation — an honest period of self-evaluation.

"We want everyone to look at themselves and see what they can do in 2008 to make a difference in their life or someone else's," Schlichte said. "We want to encourage them. Maybe something is holding them back or slowing them down. Maybe it's something they need to change with their time with God, their family, diet and exercise, finances — there will be six or seven major areas we'll go through that are great to evaluate once in awhile."

### A global scale

Beyond impacting individuals and congregations, a third goal of "You've Got the Time" is to fund the production and distribution of audio Bibles on a global scale. As part of the program, participating churches will conduct a special offering for Faith Comes by Hearing's international pro-

### If you go

**WHAT:** Rio West Community Church

**WHEN:** Sunday services at 9 and 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** 6751 Pasilla Rd. NE, Rio Rancho

**INFORMATION:** [www.riowest.org](http://www.riowest.org), 771-0284

### Other Informational sites

- Faith Comes By Hearing Web site: [faithcomesbyhearing.com](http://faithcomesbyhearing.com)
- Site for Bible downloads: <http://www.faitncomesbyhearing.com/yggt/abq>

grams, which Carl said enables poor and illiterate people in other countries to hear the Bible in their own language. He said the ministry has worked in more than 70 countries.

"The offerings raised allow

us to distribute audio Bibles worldwide, so churches also end up impacting not only their own congregation and community, but they are part of spreading the Gospel across the world," Carl said.

According to Carl, Bible listening programs have been promoted through Faith Comes by Hearing in the past. A news release from that organization states 55,000 churches have participated in one — but this is the first time an initiative has been launched on a citywide basis anywhere accompanied by major advertising support, which has Carl expecting exciting results from churches and individuals, and hoping for even bigger results.

"Statistics prove — whether you believe the Bible or not, (or) even if you know the stories in it — it affects the way you live your life through even basic principles like 'Don't lie, don't cheat and don't steal,'" Carl said. "We can change our city and our nation if people just know the Bible — and we want to make the Scripture available — for free."