God Via iPod And The Web

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif., Feb. 17, 2006

"If people come and check this out," says Patchett, "and they like what they hear, and they decide that they want to explore Christianity more, and they go and check out a church, that's great."

Horizon's pastor, Bob Botsford, sees Godcasts as an effective outreach method.

"There's a lot of people out there where church is not even on their radar screen," Botsford observes. "So, if we can get the good news to them while they're running, while they're in their car, while they're surfing, while they're golfing, that's what we are excited about, where Godcast is concerned."

"I think what's happened is (technology has) blown the church mentality of four walls and a roof ... right off the map. And that's good. Because I think Jesus wants us to go into all the world and simply preach the gospel, using every possible technology available to man."

In addition to enabling the downloading of files, thousands of churches stream, that is, broadcast their services live on the Internet.

Chance Mason, president of Streaming Faith, the largest provider of Internet services to churches worldwide, says, "The faith-based community was one of the first communities to really embrace the delivery of content via the Web."

"We currently do about 1,500-2,000 live events a month from all over the world: the East Coast, the West Coast; we have clients in New Zealand, Canada, three or four in the Bahamas."

Streaming Faith says it has a million visitors a month.

On their Web site, Turner notes, surfers can e-mail prayer requests, listen to radio broadcasts, and watch church services live.

"It's just like I'm sitting in the audience and joining in," says Marion Penman. "It's..."
like I'm at the service."

Streaming is the only way Penman can worship. She has multiple sclerosis and can't get to church.

She says the streaming has changed her life: "It's like a rejuvenation. It opened up things that I was losing. I was losing a lot spiritually. And it was like an awakening for me."

Track: for those who enjoy church, these high-tech options are a convenience.

But they are also ways to reach people who may never step foot in a sanctuary.

Both the GodCast sermons and services on Streaming Faith are free.

Turner adds that Botsford and Mason say they don't worry that the technology will keep people away from church. Quite the contrary: They say it attracts worshippers.

As for donations, you can make them online in some cases.