Church & Donor Management Software (ChMS)

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Solutions from church and donor management software providers keep improving in their ability to help churches and ministries fulfill their mission! Their features to track and communicate with people, their web and mobile device interfaces, and their powerful database tools make this category of software a big help and a valuable asset for today's ministries in reaching many with The Gospel and discipling them.

Church Software Historical Perspective

In the mid-1980s the number of these programs had grown to 262! Then some merged, some consolidated, and some went out of business, reducing the number to only 34. In the 1990s the Internet made it so easy for those writing solutions to share them that the number of solutions has since more than doubled! Our research this year found 58 solutions focusing on the church and ministry market, of which 40 qualified for this article (requirements include active marketing, minimum growth, and active development of their solution).

We always include new providers (those three years old or less) to give them a chance to build some momentum and compete with 'the big guys'. It also keeps all of the providers 'on their toes' as the upand-comers sometimes develop new technologies that benefit many churches and ministries in a new way.

Why Church Management Software?

The solution providers on the following pages meet the sophisticated and complex needs of churches and ministries. Tracking more than just names, addresses, and phone numbers, many of these also help build community and track traditional and modern family relationships, spiritual gifts, talents, interests, attendance, nursery security, contributions, fundraising campaigns, volunteerism, small groups, and more.

Church and ministry offices can be stressful workplaces because of the many deadlines that must be met by an administrative staff that is typically smaller in number than what would be found in a similarsized secular business. Church management software, if well written, can be a soothing balm. If it's powerful, capable, fast, and stable, the ministry team can rely on it to help them get the most possible work done— efficiently and with minimal stress. And if its abilities are broad enough, every ministry in the church or ministry can focus on just one database, increasing synergy and minimizing cost.

Church Management Software Defined

Some time ago Steve Hewitt, then Editor-in-Chief of *Christian Computing Magazine* (recently re-branded as *MinistryTech Magazine*), labeled the software category tailored to meet the needs of churches as *Church Management Software*, or CMS. More recently some began calling it ChMS to help prevent confusion since there are now so many software categories called 'CMS'. Parachurch ministries need to track similar data, so we invited those solutions into this article too. Following is a well-researched list of the leading ChMS providers at the time of this writing, with each stating at the top of the feature chart whether their focus is church, parachurch, or both.

Not-for-Profit Accounting

Churches and ministries exist in a unique accounting niche that most software (and even most CPAs!) can't help with. But many ChMS packages *can* help in this area.

One of a ministry's most vulnerable areas is finance. All too often we hear about churches and ministries that have suffered embezzlement by a trusted team member. One of the best protections is an accounting system that has a good audit trail, tracking the detail of every transaction and whose data cannot be altered in any way. For these reasons, some ChMS providers have written their own fully-integrated accounting system.

Some churches and ministries want a ChMS that has a fullyintegrated accounting system, and we list the functions they look for in the chart. Others may not care if the ChMS provider has written its own accounting system, and for them it's good to know that most ChMSes can interface with 'third-party' accounting systems such as those in the chart that only provide nonprofit accounting solutions.

Feature Chart

We've tried to give you the most comprehensive and quickest format possible of those ChMS database and accounting functions ministry teams request most. We removed features provided by all ChMS providers to help focus on solutions' distinct feature sets.

The chart lists solutions by the name their providers use to market them rather than by the company name. We include the company name in the section following the chart in which we give information on each provider such as how to reach them, how long they've been making their solutions available, how many organizations they currently serve, their support hours, and how often they update their software. All of the information in this article was provided by the software companies.

The chart uses two symbols:

- The " " symbol indicates features ChMS companies provide directly, and
- The " P" symbol indicates needs they meet through an outside (third party) source.

Happy Hunting!

Shop wisely. We recommend that you do your due diligence and check with current users of the software you're interested in. Ask questions like:

- Does the software do what was promised?
- Is their support team capable and available?
- If you were faced with the same decision today, what would you do differently?

Feel free to contact any of the providers listed. They would love to help you in your ministry. Happy hunting! Nick Nicholaou is president of MBS, an IT consulting firm specializing in church and ministry computer networks, VoIP, and private cloud hosted services. You can reach Nick at <u>nickn@mbsinc.com</u>, and may want to check out his firm's website (<u>www.mbsinc.com</u>) and his blog at <u>http://ministry-it.blogspot.com</u>.

Church & Donor Management Solutions (2018)

Non-Accounting Features

Accounting Features

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	Facilities &				-																	
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	±	Solution has a Completely Open API		_																_		

ACS by ACS Technologies Phone: 800.736.7425 Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 39 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 10,000 Number on Team: 395 Support: 9-8 Eastern, 9-6 Fri Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: 8

AgapeWORKS

by AgapeWORKS Phone: 760.718.3273 Email: info@agapeworks.org Web: www.agapeworks.org Company Founded in 2004 Years Marketing ChMS: 8 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6,421 Number on Team: 5 Support: 9-5 Pacific Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: 12

Aplos

by Aplos Software Phone: 888.274.1316 Email: sales@aplos.com Web: www.aplos.com Company Founded in 2009 Years Marketing ChMS: 6 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4,000 Number on Team: 40 Support: 8-4 Pacific Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Breeze

by Breeze Phone: 888.320.6030 Email: support@breezechms.com Web: www.breezechms.com Company Founded in 2012 Years Marketing ChMS: 5 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3,582 Number on Team: 27 Support: 9-5 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

CCIS Shield CMS

by CCIS Church Management Software Phone: 800.295.7551 Email: sales@ccissoftware.com Web: www.ccissoftware.com Company Founded in 1981 Years Marketing ChMS: 37 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6,722 Number on Team: 60 Support: 8-4 Eastern Last Major Release: Mar, 2017 Updates per Year: 3

CDM+

by Suran Systems, Inc. Phone: 877.891.4236 Email: sales@cdmplus.com Web: www.cdmplus.com Company Founded in 1987 Years Marketing ChMS: 30 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6,500 Number on Team: 30 Support: 8:30-6 Eastern Last Major Release: Aug, 2017 Updates per Year: 4

Church Community Builder

by Church Community Builder Phone: 866.242.1199 Email: support@churchcommunitybuilder.com Web: www.churchcommunitybuilder.com Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 18 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4,421 Number on Team: 121 Support: 7-6 Mountain Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Church MemberLink

by CAA Software, Inc. Phone: 706.864.4055 Email: support@caasoftware.com Web: www.churchmemberlink.com Company Founded in 2005 Years Marketing ChMS: 3 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 60 Number on Team: 2 Support: 9-5 Eastern Last Major Release: Aug, 2017 Updates per Year: Monthly

Church Windows Software

by Computer Helper Publishing Phone: 800.533.5227 Email: sales@churchwindows.com Web: www.churchwindows.com Company Founded in 1987 Years Marketing ChMS: 30 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 12,000 Number on Team: 25 Support: 9-6 Eastern, 9-5 Fri Last Major Release: Oct, 2016 Updates per Year: 3

Church360°

by Concordia Publishing House Phone: 800.325.2399 Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org Web: www.church360.org Company Founded in 1869 Years Marketing ChMS: 7 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1,100 Number on Team: 25 Support: 7:30-5 Central Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Churchteams

by Churchteams.com, Inc. Phone: 817.405.9750 Email: info@churchteams.com Web: www.churchteams.com Company Founded in 2001 Years Marketing ChMS: 9 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 900 Number on Team: 8 Support: 8:30-5 Central Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

ChurchTrac Online

by ChurchTrac Software, Inc. Phone: 877.704.0222 Email: support@churchtrac.com Web: www.churchtrac.com Company Founded in 2004 Years Marketing ChMS: 13 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 7,500 Number on Team: 7 Support: 8-6 Eastern Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

COMS for Windows

by Specialty Software Phone: 800.568.6350 Email: sales@specialtysoftware.com Web: www.specialtysoftware.com Company Founded in 1982 Years Marketing ChMS: 35 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6,800 Number on Team: 6 Support: 9-5 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: 4

ConnectNow

by ParishSoft (Ministry Brands) Phone: 866.930.4774 x131 Email: parishsoftsales@parishsoft.com Web: www.parishsoft.com Company Founded in 1998 Years Marketing ChMS: 19 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 11,673 Number on Team: 78 Support: 8-8 Eastern Last Major Release: Aug, 2017 Updates per Year: 4

Donarius® Church Management Software

by Nuverb Systems, Inc. Phone: 888.479.4636 Email: question@nuverb.com Web: www.donarius.com Company Founded in 1993 Years Marketing ChMS: 19 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2,300 Number on Team: 1 Support: 9-6 Eastern Last Major Release: Apr, 2017 Updates per Year: 20 Excellerate Church Management by Micro System Design Phone: 888.371.6878 Email: info@excellerate.com Web: www.excellerate.com Company Founded in 1989 Years Marketing ChMS: 19 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2,473 Number on Team: 2 Support: 9-5 Central Last Major Release: Feb, 2017 Updates per Year: 12

Faithful Steward

by Diakonia Phone: 800.325.6642 Email: info@faithfulsteward.com Web: www.church-software.com Company Founded in 1992 Years Marketing ChMS: 23 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1,085 Number on Team: 3 Support: 9-5 Central Last Major Release: Apr, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

FellowshipOne

by FellowshipOne (Ministry Brands) Phone: 844.459.8525 Email: sales@fellowshipone.com Web: www.fellowshipone.com Company Founded in 2004 Years Marketing ChMS: 13 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4,000 Number on Team: 60 Support: 7-7 Central Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Fresh Vine

by Fresh Vine Phone: 888.708.1905 Email: contact@freshvine.co Web: https://freshvine.co Company Founded in 2008 Years Marketing ChMS: 6 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 330 Number on Team: 3 Support: 10-5 Central Last Major Release: Mar, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

IconCMO

by Icon Systems Phone: 800.596.4266 Email: sales@iconcmo.com Web: www.iconcmo.com Company Founded in 1992 Years Marketing ChMS: 16 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4,500 Number on Team: 12 Support: 8-5 Central Last Major Release: Jun, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Iglesia HOY by JRSoftware Phone: 52.1.664.251.5478 Email: informacion@iglesiahoy.com Web: www.iglesiahoy.com Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 18 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3,060 Number on Team: 6 Support: 8-6 Pacific Last Major Release: Jan, 2017 Updates per Year: 3

Intacct

by Sage Intacct Phone: 877.437.7765 Email: info@intacct.com Web: www.sageintacct.com Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 18 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2,000 Number on Team: 500 Support: 6-5 Pacific Last Major Release: Aug, 2017 Updates per Year: 4

Ministry Tracker

by Faithlife Phone: 360.450.3542 Email: support@ministrytracker.com Web: www.ministrytracker.com Company Founded in 2004 Years Marketing ChMS: 14 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 600 Number on Team: 20 Support: 9-5 Pacific Last Major Release: Jun, 2017 Updates per Year: 52

MinistryPlatform

by Think Ministry Phone: 678.404.2467 Email: info@thinkministry.com Web: www.thinkministry.com Company Founded in 2007 Years Marketing ChMS: 8 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 545 Number on Team: 15 Support: 9-6 Eastern Last Major Release: Jun, 2017 Updates per Year: 20

Parish Data System (PDS)

by ACS Technologies Phone: 800.736.7425 Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 39 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 9,000 Number on Team: 395 Support: 9-8 Eastern, 9-6 Fri Last Major Release: Aug, 2017 Updates per Year: 8

PowerChurch Plus

by PowerChurch Software Phone: 800.486.1800 Email: info@powerchurch.com Web: www.powerchurch.com Company Founded in 1984 Years Marketing ChMS: 33 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 38,500 Number on Team: 16 Support: 9-6 Eastern Last Major Release: Nov, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Raiser's Edge NXT/Financial Edge NXT

by Blackbaud Phone: 404.323.0274 Email: michael.blanton@blackbaud.com Web: www.blackbaud.com Company Founded in 1981 Years Marketing ChMS: 20 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1,050 Number on Team: 500 Support: 8-8 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2017 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Realm

by ACS Technologies Phone: 800.736.7425 Email: info@acstechnologies.com Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 39 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 5,000 Number on Team: 395 Support: 8-5 Eastern Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: 23

Roll Call

by By the Book Phone: 800.554.9116 Email: info@bythebook.com Web: www.bythebook.com Company Founded in 1992 Years Marketing ChMS: 25 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4,600 Number on Team: 6 Support: 8-5 Central; 7-1 Sun Last Major Release: Dec, 2016 Updates per Year: Monthly

Seraphim Office

by Seraphim Software Phone: 855.681.6160 Email: sales@seraphimsoftware.com Web: www.seraphimsoftware.com Company Founded in 2012 Years Marketing ChMS: 5 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 300 Number on Team: 20 Support: 8-4 Eastern Last Major Release: Sep, 2017 Updates per Year: Quarterly

Servant Keeper	SimpleChurchCRM						
by Servant PC Resources, Inc.	by SimpleChurch LLC (Ministry Brands)						
Phone: 800.773.7570	Phone: 866.392.1744						
Email: sales@servantpc.com	Email: sales@simplechurchcrm.com						
Web: www.servantpc.com	Web: simplechurchcrm.com						
Company Founded in 1994	Company Founded in 2010						
Years Marketing ChMS: 23	Years Marketing ChMS: 7						
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 30,000	Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3,335						
Number on Team: 30	Number on Team: 25						
Support: 9-6 Eastern	Support: 9-6 Eastern						
Last Major Release: Feb, 2017	Last Major Release: Aug, 2017						
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web	Updates per Year: 25						
Shelby Arena	Software4Nonprofits						
by Shelby Systems, Inc. (Ministry Brands)	by Cooperstock Software						
Phone: 800.877.0222	Phone: 416.423.7722						
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com	Email: info@software4nonprofits.com						
Web: www.shelbysystems.com	Web: www.software4nonprofits.com						
Company Founded in 1976	Company Founded in 1999						
Years Marketing ChMS: 10	Years Marketing ChMS: 18						
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 640	Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6,500						
Number on Team: 95	Number on Team: 3						
Support: 7-6 Central	Support: 9-9 Eastern						
Last Major Release: Oct, 2017	Last Major Release: Aug, 2017						
Updates per Year: 4	Updates per Year: 6						
Shelby v5	The City						
by Shelby Systems, Inc. (Ministry Brands)	by ACS Technologies						
Phone: 800.877.0222	Phone: 800.736.7425						
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com	Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com						
Web: www.shelbysystems.com	Web: www.acstechnologies.com						
Company Founded in 1976	Company Founded in 2009						
Years Marketing ChMS: 42	Years Marketing ChMS: 8						
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 8,400	Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1,000						
Number on Team: 95	Number on Team: 395						
Support: 7-6 Central	Support: 9-8 Eastern, 9-6 Fri						
Last Major Release: Jul, 2017	Last Major Release: Aug, 2017						
Updates per Year: 2	Updates per Year: 4						
ShelbyNext	TouchPoint Software						
by Shelby Systems, Inc. (Ministry Brands)	by Pursuant						
Phone: 800.877.0222	Phone: 901.654.5750						
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com	Email: andrew.triplett@touchpointsoftware.com						
Web: www.shelbysystems.com	Web: www.touchpointsoftware.com						
Company Founded in 1976	Company Founded in 2008						
Years Marketing ChMS: 42	Years Marketing ChMS: 8						
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1,500	Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 300						
Number on Team: 95	Number on Team: 15						
Support: 7-6 Central	Support: 8-5 Central						
Last Major Release: Oct, 2017	Last Major Release: Oct, 2017						
Updates per Year: Monthly	Updates per Year: 12						
Shepherd's Staff	Web Church Connect						
by Concordia Publishing House	by Web Church Connect						
Phone: 800.325.2399	Phone: 800.516.7800						
Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org	Email: info@webchurchconnect.com						
Web: www.shepherdsstaff.org	Web: www.webchurchconnect.com						
Company Founded in 1869	Company Founded in 2009						
Years Marketing ChMS: 24	Years Marketing ChMS: 6						
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3,400	Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 863						
Number on Team: 25	Number on Team: 6						
Support: 7:30-5 Central	Support: 7-5 Pacific						
Last Major Release: Sep, 2017	Last Major Release: Aug, 2016						
Updates per Year: Quarterly	Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web						