Church & Donor Management Software (ChMS)

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Ministry Business Services, Inc. President
Reprinted from The Church Network's TCN Professional Journal

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 an essential tool and 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 for their own church to share them with others that the number of solutions more than doubled! Our research this year found 54 solutions focusing on the church and ministry market, of which 37 qualified for this article (requirements include active marketing, minimum market acceptance / customer growth, and active software development).

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 up-and-comers sometimes develop new technologies that benefit many churches and ministries in new ways.

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 simple CRM datasets like 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 similar-sized secular business. Church management software, if well written, can be a soothing balm. If it's powerful, capable, fast, and reliable, the ministry team can use 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

ChMS Defined

We refer to this category of solutions as **Ch**urch **M**anagement **S**oftware, or ChMS. Parachurch ministries track similar data, so we invited those solutions into this article too. Following is a well-researched list of the leading church and donor management solution providers at the time of this writing, with each stating at the top of the feature chart whether their solution is focused on meeting the needs of church, parachurch, or denominational offices. Some even provide their solutions in non-English languages!

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 a church or ministry that has 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 fully-integrated 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 other accounting systems such as those in the chart that provide standalone nonprofit accounting solutions.

The ChMS Challenge

ChMS is a challenge for many of those who work on church and ministry teams. Usually it's because they haven't been trained, sparking the concern that the ChMS is not simple or intuitive. As mentioned, though, there are too many types of deep data to be simple or intuitive.

We've added to the feature chart the ability to create custom workflows for tasks and roles that help make it simpler and more intuitive. But the key will always be training. We strongly recommend that new team members be trained before being given access to update the ChMS, and that the solution provider be contracted to come on-site or provide interactive remote training at least annually.

Making ongoing training part of your ChMS strategy will ensure that your ChMS investment will last longer and serve your team better.

Feature Chart

We've tried to give you the most comprehensive and quickest format possible of those ChMS database and accounting functions that 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 solution available, how many organizations they currently serve, their support hours, and how often they update their software. We have trusted the software companies to provide this data accurately; all of the information was provided by them.

The chart uses two symbols:

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

Happy Hunting!

Shop wisely. We recommend doing your due diligence and checking 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!

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	Church Management focus	ACS Pro. Plan		Chip Chip Chip						
Solution Focus	Parachurch / Donor Management focus									
Solu	Denomination "Editions" Available									
	Non-English Versions Available Multisite campus capable									
õ	Tracks non-traditional family structures / roles									
Database	Can track non-traditional genders (beyond male / female)									
Dat	Prints U.S. Postal Bar Codes Certified Postal CASS & PAVE									
	National Change of Address (NCOA) updates									
	Tracks Gifts in Kind (GIK) contributions									- E
	Gifts in Kind can satisfy pledge without setting GIK value Checks can be input via Check21-compliant scanner									, <u>-</u>
50	Scanning checks once produces deposit and database entry	1 336								Ē
Giving	Can store check and envelope images									
	Can import gifts received online Notifies contributor if online transaction is declined by merchant account									- -
	Congregants / Donors can view check images online									Ē
	Statements can be sent via email									
	Tracks Attendance Can post attendance using geofencing									
	Security / Check-In capability	1868					18 -			
	Can check in via iOS and/or Android tablets									- ■
	Check-in process can accommodate non-contact preferences Check-in tracks allergies, allowable check out persons, etc									
tion	Facilitates roaming checkin (like a volunteer in the parking lot with a tablet)									
Assimilation	Volunteer Recruitment functions (position description, application, etc)						-			- ₽
As	Has Background Check interface Can set cautionary 'flags' based on behavioral or legal issues									
	Approved volunteers can schedule themselves for service									Ē
	Approved volunteers can set unavailable 'blockout' dates									
	Sends volunteer commitment reminders Tracks Mission Trips (pre-trip task checklists, support, etc)									
	Manages Small Groups									
s	Facility / Equipment calendar scheduler									
Event	Fully integrates with Smart Church Solutions' eSpace Calendar scheduler can feed events to ministry's website									
Facilities & Events	Retreat / Event registration A/R tracks outstanding balances									
cilitie	Can import registrations received online without manual entry									
- E	Library Module Fixed Assets tracking (inventory, depreciation, maintenance)									
	General Ledger									
	Natural, hierarchical Chart of Accounts									
dger	Dimensional Accounting (vs natural, hierarchical Chart of Accounts) Automatically tracks multiple Fund Balances									
General Ledger	Automatically balances funds in interfund transactions									
Sene	Audit Trail is secure & unalterable (more than just password protected)									
	Can enter either Straight Line or Seasonal Budgeting by account Has method for budgeting Capital Expense items									
	Graphic analysis		<u> </u>		7 0					
	Accounts Payable and / or Bill Pay integration Can run as either Accrual or Cash Basis									
ole	Invoices can be automatically distributed to multiple GL accounts									
Payal	A single check or check run can post against multiple funds									
Accounts Payable	Can partial pay invoices; balance remaining payable with same invoice # Can automate recurring entries									
Ассо	Can void checks with option of reopening the invoice									
	Annual 1096 & 1099s									
	Purchase Order tracking (authorization, budget, & GL interface) Payroll with minister's salary capabilities (housing, SECA, etc)									
	Can allocate an person's payroll & benefit costs across multiple departments									
	Time Clock interface								<u> </u>	
ırces	Payroll ACH Direct Deposit Accrues Vacation & Sick Time by hours worked or pay period									
Resou	Hiring & termination process & documentation w solution-driven self-audit									
man	Vacation request / scheduler with schedule view by department									
/ Hui	Tracks & stores images of HR forms Tracks employee discipline records									
Payroll / Human Resources	Federal tax tables are maintained by software provider									
ď	State tax tables are maintained by software provider									
	All Federal & State payroll tax forms Can e-file state & federal taxes									
	Workers Compensation Audit									
>	Has an open API for custom integrations Can create custom workflow pages to simplify user experience & focus									
ecurit	Congregant online access can be tied to Facebook or Google credentials									
Access & Security	Congregants / Donors can update their profile data									
cces	Congregants can set which of their online data is inaccessible by other congregants Field-level access / entry security									
4	Maintains transactional database of who made changes									
Ę	Tracks & uses people's preferences for text messages, mail, email									
Communication	Can send individual text messages without knowing carrier Can send individually-addressed mail-merged bulk email									
mun	Facilitates and tracks staff communication follow-up									
Com	Links to congregants' social media accounts								■ -	
	Does HTML marketing email and / or interfaces w Constant Contact or MailChimp Data is accessible in real-time via iOS & Android mobile devices									
Mobile & Web	Has mobile (responsive website) interface									
≥ ∞	Has mobile app									
nts ies	Multiple concurrent user access Web browser interface									
ment	Includes a user-accessible, customizable report system									
Requirements & Capabilities	Data is accessible & fully exportable in multiple formats									
Rec & C	Excel Pivot Table interface						<i>.</i>			
	Graphics-capable dashboard with drill-down capabilities Can run on ministry's server									
How	Can run hosted on ChMS provider's server									
ž Š	All data transmission between church staff / congregants & hosted database is encrypted									
	ChMS provider hosting datacenter is Certified Tier 3 or higher									

ACS

By ACS Technologies Phone: 800.736.7425 Email: sales@acst.com

Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 41

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 7903

Number on Team: 421

Support: 9 - 8 M-Th, 9 - 6 Fri Eastern Last Major Release: Dec, 2020

Updates per Year: 6

Atom

By Micro System Design Phone: 888.371.6878 Email: info@excellerate.com Web: www.excellerate.com Company Founded in 1989 Years Marketing ChMS: 1

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 33

Number on Team: 2 Support: 9 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Blackbaud Faith Solutions

By Blackbaud

Phone: 800.443.9441

Email: solutions@blackbaud.com Web: www.blackbaud.com/faith Company Founded in 1981 Years Marketing ChMS: 20

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2000

Number on Team: 3000

Support: 24•7

Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Breeze Church Management

By Breeze

Phone: 888.320.6030

Email: support@breezechms.com Web: www.breezechms.com Company Founded in 2013 Years Marketing ChMS: 7

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 8704

Number on Team: 49 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern Last Major Release: Dec, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

CahabaWorks Church Software

By CahabaCreek Software Phone: 205.621.9649

Email: sales@cahabacreek.com Web: www.cahabacreek.com Company Founded in 1997 Years Marketing ChMS: 12

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1620

Number on Team: 8

Support: 9 - 4 M-Th Central; Email 24•7

Last Major Release: Dec, 2020

Updates per Year: 3

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: 40

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6800

Number on Team: 60 Support: 8 - 5 Eastern Last Major Release: Jan, 2021

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: 33

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3175

Number on Team: 19 Support: 8:30 - 6 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Church Community Builder

By Pushpay

Phone: 844.787.4729 Email: team@pushpay.com Web: www.pushpay.com Company Founded in 2011 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4182

Number on Team: 412 Support: 7 - 6 Mountain Last Major Release: Sep, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Church Membership Directory

By Software for Ministry Phone: 817.219.1243

Email: info@softwareforministry.com Web: www.softwareforministry.com

Company Founded in 1984 Years Marketing ChMS: 36

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 325

Number on Team: 2 Support: 9 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Jan, 2020

Updates per Year: 4

Church Windows

By Computer Helper Publishing

Phone: 800.533.5227

Email: sales@churchwindows.com Web: www.churchwindows.com Company Founded in 1987 Years Marketing ChMS: 26

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 12000

Number on Team: 30

Support: 9 - 6 M-Th Eastern, 9 - 5 Fri Last Major Release: Dec, 2020

Updates per Year: 1

Church360°

By Concordia Technology Solutions

Phone: 800.325.2399

Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org Web: www.church360.org Company Founded in 1869 Years Marketing ChMS: 10

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1400

Number on Team: 25 Support: 7:30 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 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 2000 Years Marketing ChMS: 7

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 804

Number on Team: 8 Support: 9 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Dec

Last Major Release: Dec, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

ChurchTrac

By ChurchTrac Software, Inc. Phone: 877.704.0222

Email: support@churchtrac.com Web: www.churchtrac.com Company Founded in 2002 Years Marketing ChMS: 18

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 9800

Number on Team: 10 Support: 8 - 8 Eastern

Last Major Release: Mar, 2021

Updates per Year: 4

COMS and/or EFA for Windows

By Specialty Software Phone: 321.821.9422

Email: sales@specialtysoftware.com
Web: www.specialtysoftware.com

Company Founded in 1984 Years Marketing ChMS: 37

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2500

Number on Team: 5 Support: 9 - 4 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2020

Updates per Year: 4

Connection Card Pro

By Connection Card Inc. Phone: 888.777.0928

Email: sales@connectioncard.net Web: www.connectioncardpro.com

Company Founded in 2017 Years Marketing ChMS: 3

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 200

Number on Team: 4 Support: 7 - 7 Pacific Last Major Release: Jan, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Donarius Church Management Software

By Nuverb Systems Inc. Phone: 888.479.4636

Email: question@nuverb.com Web: www.donarius.com Company Founded in 1997 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2532

Number on Team: 1 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern

Last Major Release: Aug, 2020

Updates per Year: 20

DONATION and ACCOUNTS

By Cooperstock Software Phone: 416.423.7722

Email: info@software4nonprofits.com Web: www.software4nonprofits.com

Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 5660

Number on Team: 3 Support: 9 - 9 Eastern Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: 12

Elexio Community

By Elexio, a division of Ministry Brands

Phone: 888.997.9947 Email: Sales@Elexio.com Web: www.elexio.com Company Founded in 2002 Years Marketing ChMS: 19

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2785

Number on Team: 31

Support: 9 - 5 M-F, 8 - 4 Sun Eastern Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Excellerate Desktop

By Micro System Design Phone: 888.371.6878 Email: info@excellerate.com Web: www.excellerate.com Company Founded in 1989 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2824

Number on Team: 2 Support: 9 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Sen

Last Major Release: Sep, 2020

Updates per Year: 8

Faithful Steward

By Diakonia LLC Phone: 314.256.9073

Email: info@faithfulsteward.com Web: www.church-software.com Company Founded in 1992 Years Marketing ChMS: 27

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1088

Number on Team: 3 Support: 9 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Jan, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Faithlife Equip

By Faithlife

Phone: 888.503.2186 Email: sales@faithlife.com

Web: https://faithlife.com/products/equip

Company Founded in 1986 Years Marketing ChMS: 2

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1000

Number on Team: 400 Support: 6 - 6 Pacific

Last Major Release: Jan, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

FastFund Online Accounting

Bv Araize

Phone: 866.840.7449 Email: sales@araize.com Web: www.araize.com Company Founded in 1985 Years Marketing ChMS: 9

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1100

Number on Team: 8 Support: 9 - 5 Eastern Last Major Release: Jan, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

FellowshipOne

By FellowshipOne, a division of Ministry Brands

Phone: 844.459.8525

Email: salesadmin@fellowshipone.com Web: www.fellowshipone.com Company Founded in 2004 Years Marketing ChMS: 17

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1200

Number on Team: 30 Support: 7 - 6 Central

Last Major Release: Dec, 2020 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: 29

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2600

Number on Team: 8 Support: 8 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Iglesia en Conexion

By JR Software

Phone: +52 661.145.0151

Email: info@iglesiaenconexion.com Web: www.iglesiaenconexion.com

Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 3

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 200

Number on Team: 6 Support: 8 - 6 Pacific Last Major Release: Feb, 2021

Updates per Year: 4

Iglesia HOY

By JR Software

Phone: +52 661.145.0151

Email: informacion@iglesiahoy.com

Web: www.iglesiahoy.com Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 21

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3600

Number on Team: 6 Support: 8 - 6 Pacific

Last Major Release: Apr, 2020

Updates per Year: 2

MinistryPlatform

By Think Ministry Phone: 678.404.2467

Email: sales@ministryplatform.com Web: www.ministryplatform.com Company Founded in 2006

Years Marketing ChMS: 13

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 835

Number on Team: 20 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern Last Major Release: Feb, 2021

Updates per Year: 6

Parish Data Systems (PDS)

By ACS Technologies Phone: 800.736.7425 Email: sales@acst.com

Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 40

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 5703

Number on Team: 421 Support: 9 - 8 M-Th, 9 - 6 Fri Eastern Last Major Release: Jul, 2020

Updates per Year: 4

ParishSOFT Family Suite

By ParishSOFT, a division of Ministry Brands

Phone: 866.930.4774

Email: parishsoftsales@parishsoft.com

Web: www.parishsoft.com Company Founded in 1998 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 9900

Number on Team: 65
Support: 8:30 - 7 Eastern
Last Major Release: Feb, 2021
Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

PowerChurch

By PowerChurch Software Phone: 800.486.1800

Email: info@powerchurch.com Web: www.powerchurch.com Company Founded in 1984 Years Marketing ChMS: 36

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 38000

Number on Team: 17 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern Last Major Release: Oct, 2019 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Realm

By ACS Technologies Phone: 843.610.1126 Email: sales@acst.com

Web: www.acstechnologies.com Company Founded in 1978 Years Marketing ChMS: 8

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 9321

Number on Team: 421

Support: 9 - 8 M-Th, 9 - 6 Fri Eastern Last Major Release: Feb, 2021

Updates per Year: 26

Sage Intacct

By Sage Intacct Phone: 512.470.3929

Email: joan.benson@sage.com Web: www.sageintacct.com Company Founded in 1999 Years Marketing ChMS: 22

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3000

Number on Team: 1000 Support: 6 - 5 Pacific

Last Major Release: Nov, 2020

Updates per Year: 4

SeekerWorks.NET

By SeekerWorks Inc. Phone: 763.262.0333

Email: sales@seekerworks.com Web: www.seekerworks.net Company Founded in 2011 Years Marketing ChMS: 1

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1

Number on Team: 1 Support: 10 - 8 Central Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

ShelbyNext

By Shelby Systems, a division of Ministry Brands

Phone: 800.877.0222

Email: salesreps@shelbyinc.com Web: www.shelbysystems.com Company Founded in 1976 Years Marketing ChMS: 44

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2803

Number on Team: 95 Support: 7 - 6 Central Last Major Release: Jan, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Shepherd's Staff

By Concordia Technology Solutions

Phone: 800.325.2399

Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org Web: www.shepherdsstaff.org Company Founded in 1869 Years Marketing ChMS: 27

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2800

Number on Team: 25 Support: 7:30 - 5 Central Last Major Release: Jul, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

Tithe.ly ChMS

By Tithe.ly

Phone: 424.228.8870 Email: hello@tithe.ly Web: get.tithe.ly Company Founded in 2015

Years Marketing ChMS: 2

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2581

Number on Team: 125 Support: 6 - 10 Pacific

Last Major Release: Nov, 2020 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

TouchPoint Software

By TouchPoint Software Inc. Phone: 214.866.7777

Email: sales@touchpointsoftware.com

Web: www.touchpointsoftware.com

Company Founded in 2008 Years Marketing ChMS: 12

Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 600

Number on Team: 18 Support: 8 - 5 Central

Last Major Release: Feb, 2021 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web