

Church & Donor Management Software (ChMS)

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Ministry Business Services, Inc. President

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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 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 72 solutions focusing on the church and ministry market, of which 39 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 up-and-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 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 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 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 '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 (a change since last year). We included the company name, however, 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 "■" 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!

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ACS

by ACS Technologies
 Phone: 800.736.7425
 Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com
 Web: www.acstechnologies.com
 Company Founded in 1978
 Years Marketing CMS: 39
 Ministries Currently Using: 50000
 Number on Team: 395
 Support: 9a-8p M-Th, 9a-6p Fri Eastern
 Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 8

AgapeWORKS

by AgapeWORKS
 Phone: 760.718.3273 x2
 Email: info@agapeworks.org
 Web: www.agapeworks.org
 Company Founded in 2004
 Years Marketing CMS: 11
 Ministries Currently Using: 6188
 Number on Team: 5
 Support: 9a-5p Pacific
 Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 12

Aplos Accounting

by Aplos Software
 Phone: 888.274.1316
 Email: sales@aplos.com
 Web: www.aplos.com
 Company Founded in 2009
 Years Marketing CMS: 5
 Ministries Currently Using: 3200
 Number on Team: 32
 Support: 8a-4p Pacific
 Last Major Release: 9/1/2016
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Breeze

by Breeze
 Phone: 888.320.6030
 Email: support@breezechms.com
 Web: www.breezechms.com
 Company Founded in 2013
 Years Marketing CMS: 3
 Ministries Currently Using: 1600
 Number on Team: 12
 Support: 9a-5p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

CahabaWorks

by CahabaCreek Software (2AB, Inc.)
 Phone: 205.621.9649
 Email: sales@cahabacreek.com
 Web: www.cahabacreek.com
 Company Founded in 1997
 Years Marketing CMS: 11
 Ministries Currently Using: 1078
 Number on Team: 8
 Support: 9a-4p Central
 Last Major Release: 3/1/2016
 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 CMS: 36
 Ministries Currently Using: 6704
 Number on Team: 60
 Support: 8a-5p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 3/1/2016
 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 CMS: 30
 Ministries Currently Using: 6500
 Number on Team: 30
 Support: 8:30a-6p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 4

Church Membership Directory

by Software for Ministry
 Phone: 817.219.1243
 Email: mic@softwareforministry.com
 Web: www.softwareforministry.com
 Company Founded in 1984
 Years Marketing CMS: 32
 Ministries Currently Using: 400
 Number on Team: 2
 Support: 9a-5p Central
 Last Major Release: 2/15/2016
 Updates per Year: 3

Church Windows

by Computer Helper Publishing
 Phone: 800.533.5227
 Email: sales@churchwindows.com
 Web: www.churchwindows.com
 Company Founded in 1987
 Years Marketing CMS: 29
 Ministries Currently Using: 12000
 Number on Team: 28
 Support: 9a-6p M-Th, 9a-5p Fri Eastern
 Last Major Release: 8/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 1

Church360°

by Concordia Technology Solutions
 Phone: 800.325.2399
 Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org
 Web: www.concordiatechnology.org/
 Company Founded in 1869
 Years Marketing CMS: 32
 Ministries Currently Using: 1100
 Number on Team: 25
 Support: 7:30a-5p Central
 Last Major Release: 8/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 15

Churchteams

by Churchteams.com, Inc
 Phone: 817.320.4112
 Email: info@churchteams.com
 Web: https://churchteams.com
 Company Founded in 2001
 Years Marketing CMS: 9
 Ministries Currently Using: 950
 Number on Team: 7
 Support: 8:30a to 5p Central
 Last Major Release: 6/1/2016
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

ChurchTrac Software

by ChurchTrac Software, Inc.
 Phone: 877.704.0222
 Email: josh@churchtrac.com
 Web: https://churchtraconline.com
 Company Founded in 2004
 Years Marketing CMS: 13
 Ministries Currently Using: 6800
 Number on Team: 6
 Support: 8a-6p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 10/21/2016
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

COMS and/or EFA for Windows

by Specialty Software
 Phone: 800.568.6350
 Email: sales@specialtysoftware.com
 Web: www.SpecialtySoftware.com
 Company Founded in 1982
 Years Marketing CMS: 34
 Ministries Currently Using: 6000
 Number on Team: 10
 Support: 9a-5p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
 Updates per Year: 4

Cool Life CRM

by Cool Life CRM, Inc.
 Phone: 800.988.8850
 Email: sales@coollifecrm.com
 Web: www.coollifecrm.com
 Company Founded in 2005
 Years Marketing CMS: 3
 Ministries Currently Using: 34
 Number on Team: 6
 Support: 8a-6p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 3/1/2015
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Donarius ChMS

by Nuverb Systems Inc.
 Phone: 888.479.4636
 Email: question@nuverb.com
 Web: www.donarius.com
 Company Founded in 1993
 Years Marketing CMS: 18
 Ministries Currently Using: 2210
 Number on Team: 1
 Support: 9a-6p Eastern
 Last Major Release: 8/1/2016
 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 CMS: 18
Ministries Currently Using: 2396
Number on Team: 3
Support: 9a-5p Central
Last Major Release: 7/27/2016
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 CMS: 22
Ministries Currently Using: 1084
Number on Team: 3
Support: 9a-5p Central
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
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 CMS: 12
Ministries Currently Using: 4000
Number on Team: 50
Support: 7a-7p Central
Last Major Release: 8/16/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Financial Edge NXT & Raiser's Edge NXT

by Blackbaud
Phone: 800.443.9441
Email: solutions@blackbaud.com
Web: www.blackbaud.com
Company Founded in 1981
Years Marketing CMS: 20
Ministries Currently Using: 1050
Number on Team: 500
Support: 8a-8p Eastern
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

FlockBase Church Software

by Owen & Walker Software Solutions
Phone: 877.883.5625
Email: ken@flockbase.com
Web: www.flockbase.com
Company Founded in 2006
Years Marketing CMS: 10
Ministries Currently Using: 3127
Number on Team: 2
Support: 9a-5:30p Central
Last Major Release: 12/1/2015
Updates per Year: 1

Fresh Vine

by Fresh Vine
Phone: 888.708.1905
Email: contact@freshvine.co
Web: https://freshvine.co
Company Founded in 2008
Years Marketing CMS: 5
Ministries Currently Using: 330
Number on Team: 3
Support: 10a-5p Central
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Iglesia HOY

by JR Software
Phone: 52+1.664.251.5478
Email: informacion@iglesiahoy.com
Web: www.iglesiahoy.com
Company Founded in 1999
Years Marketing CMS: 17
Ministries Currently Using: 2800
Number on Team: 6
Support: 8a-6p Pacific
Last Major Release: 7/1/2015
Updates per Year: 3

Intacct

by Intacct
Phone: 877.437.7765
Email: info@intacct.com
Web: www.intacct.com
Company Founded in 1999
Years Marketing CMS: 16
Ministries Currently Using: 1700
Number on Team: 450
Support: 6a-5p Pacific
Last Major Release: 11/1/2016
Updates per Year: 4

MinistryTracker.com

by Ministry Tracker
Phone: 360.450.3542
Email: support@ministrytracker.com
Web: www.ministrytracker.com
Company Founded in 2004
Years Marketing CMS: 13
Ministries Currently Using: 2000
Number on Team: 5
Support: 9a-5p Pacific + 24*7 Pager
Last Major Release: 6/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

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 CMS: 39
Ministries Currently Using: 50000
Number on Team: 395
Support: 9a-8p M-Th, 9a-6p Fri Eastern
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: 8

ParishSoft ConnectNow

by ParishSoft (Ministry Brands)
Phone: 866.930.4774 x7
Email: info@parishsoft.com
Web: www.parishsoft.com
Company Founded in 1998
Years Marketing CMS: 18
Ministries Currently Using: 12000
Number on Team: 78
Support: 8a-8p Eastern
Last Major Release: 8/1/2016
Updates per Year: 4

Realm

by ACS Technologies
Phone: 800.736.7425
Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com
Web: www.acstechnologies.com
Company Founded in 1978
Years Marketing CMS: 39
Ministries Currently Using: 50000
Number on Team: 395
Support: 9a-8p M-Th, 9a-6p Fri Eastern
Last Major Release: 10/27/2016
Updates per Year: 20

Rock RMS

by Spark Development Network, Inc.
Phone: 623.777.3377
Email: info@sparkdevnetwork.org
Web: www.rockrms.com
Company Founded in 2012
Years Marketing CMS: 1
Ministries Currently Using: 150
Number on Team: 3
Support: 24*7 via Web or Email
Last Major Release: 8/1/2016
Updates per Year: 2

Roll Call

by By the Book
Phone: 815.234.7530
Email: kim@bythebook.com
Web: www.bythebook.com
Company Founded in 1992
Years Marketing CMS: 24
Ministries Currently Using: 4806
Number on Team: 6
Support: 8a- 5p M-F, 7a-1p Sun Central
Last Major Release: 12/15/2016
Updates per Year: 1

Seraphim Software

by Seraphim Software
Phone: 855.681.6160
Email: info@seraphimsoftware.com
Web: www.seraphimsoftware.com
Company Founded in 2012
Years Marketing CMS: 3
Ministries Currently Using: 225
Number on Team: 18
Support: 8a-7p Eastern
Last Major Release: 10/16/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Servant Keeper

by Servant PC Resources, Inc
Phone: 800.773.7570
Email: sales@servantpc.com
Web: www.servantpc.com
Company Founded in 1994
Years Marketing CMS: 22
Ministries Currently Using: 35000
Number on Team: 30
Support: 9a-6p Eastern
Last Major Release: 1/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Shelby Systems

by Shelby Systems (Ministry Brands)
Phone: 800.877.0222
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com
Web: www.shelbysystems.com
Company Founded in 1976
Years Marketing CMS: 41
Ministries Currently Using: 8700
Number on Team: 84
Support: 7a -6p Central
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: 3

Shepherd's Staff

by Concordia Technology Solutions
Phone: 800.325.2399
Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org
Web: www.concordiatechnology.org/
Company Founded in 1869
Years Marketing CMS: 32
Ministries Currently Using: 3500
Number on Team: 25
Support: 7:30a-5p Central
Last Major Release: 5/1/2016
Updates per Year: 2

Software4Nonprofits

by Cooperstock Software
Phone: 416.423.7722
Email: info@software4nonprofits.com
Web: www.software4nonprofits.com
Company Founded in 1999
Years Marketing CMS: 17
Ministries Currently Using: 5600
Number on Team: 2
Support: 9a-9p Eastern
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: 12

The City

by ACS Technologies
Phone: 800.736.7425
Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com
Web: www.acstechnologies.com
Company Founded in 1978
Years Marketing CMS: 39
Ministries Currently Using: 50000
Number on Team: 395
Support: 9a-8p M-Th, 9a-6p Fri Eastern
Last Major Release: 9/1/2016
Updates per Year: 4

TouchPoint Software

by TouchPoint Software LLC
Phone: 208.963.5388
Email: info@touchpointsoftware.com
Web: www.touchpointsoftware.com
Company Founded in 2009
Years Marketing CMS: 6
Ministries Currently Using: 285
Number on Team: 5
Support: 8a-5p Central + 24•7 via Email
Last Major Release: 10/27/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

UCare

by UCare Technologies PTY LTD
Phone: via Email Only
Email: support@ucarehq.com
Web: www.ucarehq.com
Company Founded in 2011
Years Marketing CMS: 5
Ministries Currently Using: 400
Number on Team: 7
Support: 24•7 via Web or Email
Last Major Release: 10/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

Web Church Connect

by Web Church Connect
Phone: 877.225.3713
Email: info@webchurchconnect.com
Web: https://wcclite.com
Company Founded in 2011
Years Marketing CMS: 5
Ministries Currently Using: 325
Number on Team: 4
Support: 7a-5p Pacific
Last Major Release: 7/1/2016
Updates per Year: 3

Xero

by Xero
Phone: via Email Only
Email: sales@xero.com
Web: www.xero.com
Company Founded in 2006
Years Marketing CMS: 9
Ministries Currently Using: 1000
Number on Team: 1400
Support: 24•7
Last Major Release: 11/1/2016
Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web
