

# Why Every Church Needs Church Management Software

By Henry Czubkowski

You may wonder how difficult church management software packages are to use. Today's versions of church management software have a smaller learning curve than the ones that were available a few years ago.

Recently, churches have been asking themselves if they need church management software. The answer seems to be "yes" for more and more churches worldwide. There has been an increase in church management software sales like never before. Church management software packages are providing features that aim to suit as many desires and needs as possible.

With this thought in mind, several manufacturers have set up complex feedback support so that they can become more aware of the direction in which the trends are going and solicit opinions on what should be changed in the current version of their software. As a result of this strategy, church management software is better than ever, but should your church use it?

First, there are three important questions you need to answer.

## 1. DOES YOUR STAFF NEED HELP?

As membership numbers increase, so does the administration work, which needs to be done by the employees or volunteers.

Good church management software can help you save time and money. You can automate many of the time-consuming tasks associated with church management, thereby relieving some of your burden and eliminating the expense of hiring several full-time employees or trying to find experienced volunteers.

Church management software is now designed for all types of churches; they can be church plants or established churches, regardless of how many are in membership. Years ago, this type of software was developed for churches with membership numbers consisting of 100 people or more. Today, small churches are able to start using church management software from the beginning of the church's launch because it will help start the organization process before things get out of hand.

## 2. ARE YOU ABLE TO TRACK IMPORTANT INFORMATION?

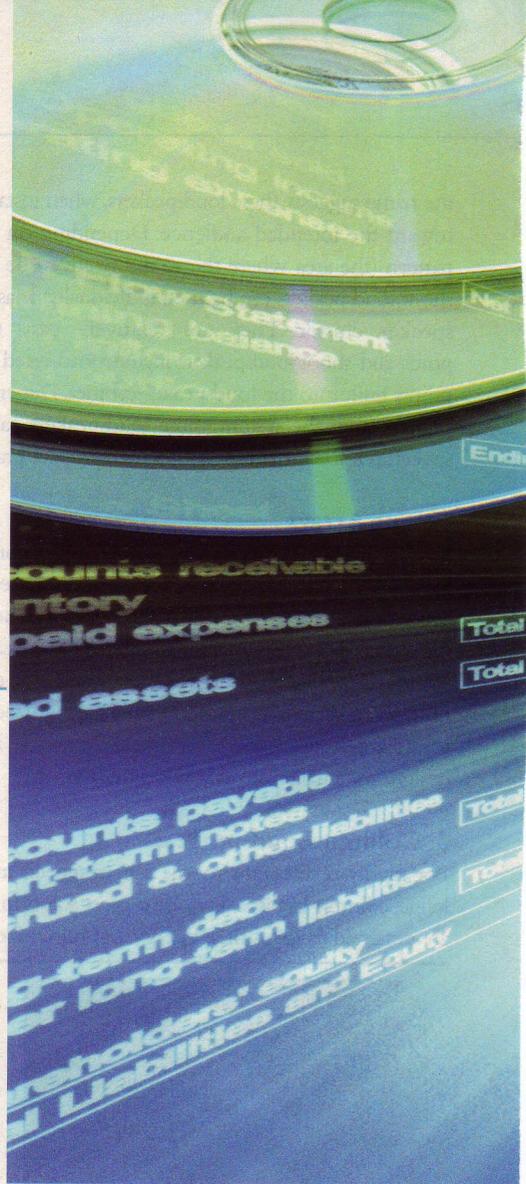
Detailed information should be available for each member, new visitors, their spiritual milestones, class participation, donations, ministries involvement, their attendance, prayer requests, and events. Good church

management software enables you to do demographic analysis, advertising analysis, and giving analysis, which will provide you with enough information to show you where to put most of your efforts so you can grow a healthy church. You will be able to generate reports that will help evaluate the needs of each member. Some packages can even help plan, organize, and analyze upcoming and past events.

Church management software is usually considered when problems arise. It is more effective when this type of management tool is initiated from the beginning. This mistake has been made over and over again.

## 3. DOES YOUR CHURCH HAVE CONSISTENT AND HEALTHY GROWTH?

The statistics show that 70% to 80% of





church plants fail in the first year. Established churches stagnate or lose some of their membership after five to seven years. One reason is that there are very few resources or tools available to help church planters or established churches manage the many diverse aspects of administration, growth, and health. The church administrators and staff need to know the degree of involvement of each member for the purpose of selecting volunteers. Follow-up is very important in growing a healthy church. If you do not have a management system in place, this could affect your visitor and member attendance.

### EASE OF USE

Today's versions of church management software have a smaller learning curve than the ones that were available a few years ago. Many church programs come with an easy step-by-

step manual and "help" files. Good technical support is also available.

What does easiness in use really translate to? It translates to the fact that it saves time. In some instances, time is money, and nobody can ever get time back. Technology has improved so much that it only takes a couple of mouse clicks or pressing a few keys on your keyboard to make a simple entry. Imagine doing this same process by using a pen! How much time does that save you? Some churches have cut their workload by as much as 50% and more.

Church management software can help you gain more time to work on other important needs in the ministry. If you are unsure if this type of software will work for you, see if a free demo is available by the software company.

### AFFORDABILITY

Some of these programs are priced according to the size of the church membership and others have a fixed asking price. Some companies charge a monthly technical support fee, and others include a designated amount of free technical support based on the type of software package purchased. Every software company has its own pricing structure. Today, these types of programs are affordable for any size church for a wide variety of prices.

### CRITERIA

With the increase in demand for software aids within the church, different software packages have been developed. We are not able to compare the features of all the software in this article. There is a variety of church management software available, and there are many factors involved with making the selection of a

# Church Management Software

package that will best suit your church's needs.

Below are some of the main criteria that make a good church management software system:

- Is it user friendly?
- Does it save time?
- Does it help analyze ministry participation and guide you to improve it?
- Does it help assess the financial giving of the church?
- Does it have filters so you can generate reports to your criteria?
- Does it create financial statements for donors and financial analysis reports?
- Does it produce follow-up letters or lists for visitors and members?
- Is it compatible with your computer system?

## RESEARCH

One of the most important aspects of buying software is research. A little research can do

wonders, but first you need to know what you are looking for. A great help to buyers is the option of the demo, or trial version, available with most packages. This basically means you can try before you buy. The main limitation to a demo version is usually the amount of data that can be stored and the types of reports that can be generated. Some demos have a 30-day trial period before it expires. Despite the limitations, you really can get a good idea if the package will suit your needs.

Using a demo version will also give you a good idea about the price differences between packages. By trying and comparing two versions, you can see if it really is worth paying the extra money for some added features. You will, in many cases, find packages with the same features, but at very different prices.

The benefits and features of church management software vary from program to program, so you can imagine that it may take some time to decide on a package that suits your ministry needs. To help you select the right software, you'll need to examine what your needs are before purchasing a software

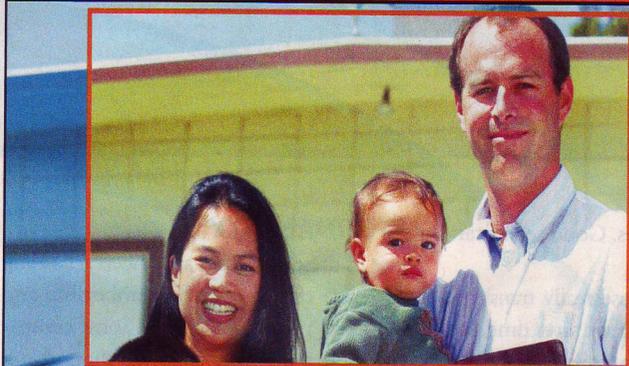
package. On the other hand, by previewing the demo software, it could highlight areas in the program that may be beneficial in your church management.

Remember, this software is only a tool that can help you manage your church efficiently. You will be able to pinpoint the problems before they occur. You will become a better steward of where to advertise and where not to advertise. You can get a better handle on those who are faithful and committed to the church. Some church management software packages can generate a personal profile of each member.

You can see that a good church management software package can be very beneficial to the operation of your church. Being well-organized can help your church grow in a consistent and healthy way. **RPN**

**Henry Czubkowski** is the president of HPC Business Consultants, [www.hpcbc.com](http://www.hpcbc.com), which specializes in church management.

Win a PhoneTree 2500 Congregational Messaging System for your church! → [www.phonetree.com/rpn](http://www.phonetree.com/rpn)



# Engage new members!

## Send the Right Message!

As your church hosts visitors and welcomes new members, it's important to let everyone know they're appreciated. With just a few minutes of your time, your personal message can reach prospects, visiting families, or even the entire congregation with PhoneTree® — by phone, email, or text messaging — remotely or right from your desktop.

Experience the ways PhoneTree can help your church's growing membership stay active, in touch and *engaged*.

Visit us at these upcoming events:

- Assembly of God 52nd Gen Council • Indianapolis, IN • Aug 9
- MinistryCOM • Franklin, TN • September 13
- Wired Churches - Innovate 2007 • Granger, IN • September 27

See how PhoneTree can work for *your* church!



Call for a free Demo! • 800.951.8733 • [www.phonetree.com/rpn](http://www.phonetree.com/rpn)

CIRCLE 65 ON READER SERVICE CARD