

MinistryTech

WINTER 2020

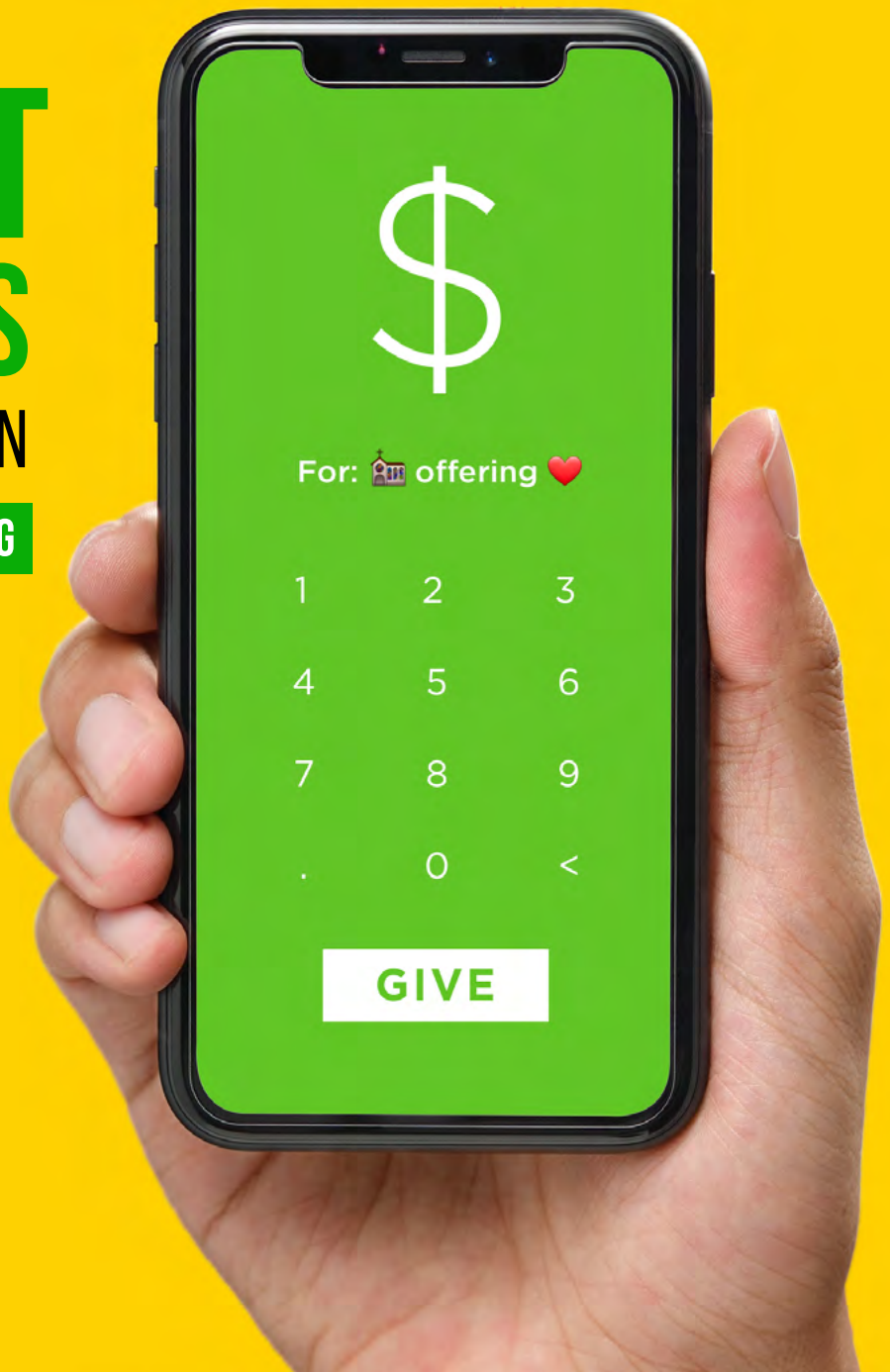
by CHURCHLEADERS

THE BEST GIVING APPS

TO DRIVE YOUR MISSION

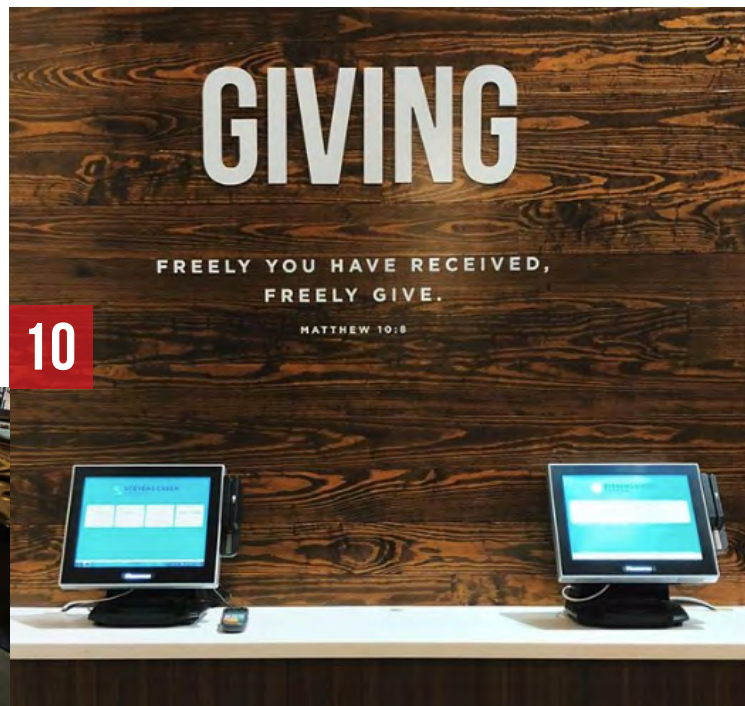
BETTER TECH FOR BETTER GIVING

- >> NEW YEAR, NEW GEAR
- >> DECODE BACKGROUND
CHECK RED FLAGS
- >> YOUR EASY LEARNING
CURVE TO GREAT SOUND!



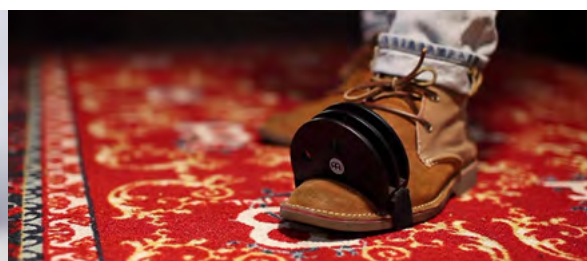
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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Ray Hollenbach



I wonder if the Apostle Paul would have any opinions regarding biometric children's church check-in systems.

Whew! It's tiring just to get all the words in the right order. And yet—using such technology is the norm for “doing church” in North America in the 21st century—a century now entering its *third* decade!

Of course, it's fun to play with anachronisms, those mash-ups of modern church and the church we read about in the book of Acts. But there *are* some resonate themes that connect us with our brothers and sisters of 20 centuries ago. Historians tell us that the single greatest social factor in the rise of the Christian church was the care and dignity afforded to those considered outcasts by the Roman Empire: women, the poor, slaves, immigrants (anyone who was not a citizen), and anyone else considered unnecessary to the strength of Rome.

In our modern setting the values of efficiency and scale, those twin brothers of the global economy, attempt to tell us that systems are more important than those they serve. But it's the church of the Lord Jesus Christ that continues the same mission she's had for two millennia: to seek, serve, and save

those who are lost.

But simply by meeting each week for worship, word and sacrament, the church inevitably uses technology—from background checks to protect the children we serve (see Dan Raley's cautionary piece), to microphones capable of reaching thousands of people gathered together (see Caleb Neff's fine review), to mobile apps that allow God's people to contribute to God's work (see the *5 Mobile Giving Apps We Love*). ***We use these technologies to manifest God's love for every human being.***

Ever since God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, the mission of God's people has been to steward creation—and every soul who breathes the air in that creation. In part, the mission of the modern church is to demonstrate God's values: that life—each life—is greater than any machine devised by the ingenuity of Man; that *technology is always the servant*, and humanity should always be the master. Our calling is never to reject technology, but to demonstrate that the lowliest creature is of greater value than the greatest invention of Man.

Ray Hollenbach is the Editor of MinistryTech Magazine. He is also the editor of ChurchLeaders.com and ChurchPlants.com. You can reach him at rhollenbach@outreach.com.

TECH CHECK 01.20

DAWS FOR EVERY BUDGET

How's this for a price spread: from *free* to hundreds of dollars. Welcome to the world of DAWs. Wait—what's a DAW? The acronym denotes Digit Audio Workstation, which is tech-speak for a wide variety of software, firmware and hardware. It's where software and hardware meet and become capable of making audio magic for any church.

Mina Studio's [seven-minute video](#) is a great introduction to the neophyte. It's a great place to start, and start for free. You can follow the audio path through to editing software like [NCH's WavePad Audio Editing Software](#) (for under a hundred bucks!).

Of course, if money is no object, you can still indulge in the hardware-based DAWs, like Icon Pro Audio DAW Controller, at only \$700. ■

CHILDREN'S CHECK-IN SAFETY: USE BIOMETRICS!

People may forget their username, ID number and of course their password—but they can never forget their fingers!

The growing trend in children's check-in software is biometric devices. It's a no-brainer: If your iPhone can recognize your face or finger, why shouldn't your security check-in procedures use the same technology? Popular devices now measure fingerprints and faces, vastly improving child safety and security.

With price points at \$100 and below, a high level of security (not to mention peace of mind!) is now within budget-reach of nearly any church. These ID hardware devices integrate well with most laptops. Check out the [fingerprint reader by SecuGen](#), capable of connecting via a simple USB port, or [LitBit's face recognition IR camera](#), which integrates with most Windows applications. ■



DURING MY SERMON: PLEASE SPEAK UP!

What if the pastor started Sunday morning's message with "Go ahead and pull out your phones . . ." but then—instead of saying "turn them off"—the pastor said, "Tell me what you think"?

Let's face it: Cell phones are everywhere, and no one willingly turns them off. That's why one rising trend among congregations is to invite congregational feedback during the message in real-time, using tools like [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Slido](#).

With these tools you can:

- Ask a question (use multiple choice questions to "test the room").
- Collect live responses (allow your listeners to provide input).
- See instant results (using graphs or charts embedded in your message).

Free trials are available from nearly any vendor—it could revolutionize the sermon! ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Who can possibly keep up with all the tech options available these days? TECH CHECK highlights tech news and new gadgets that save you time, energy, money—and keep you from re-inventing the wheel. Have a hot tech tip or news item? Email rhollenbach@outreach.com.

CONVERGING TECHNOLOGIES

—A MIXED BAG OF BLESSINGS

"Convergence" is one of those buzz words in technology folks throw around to make their product or service look important. Many times it does, but what exactly are converging technologies, and should we care? Converging technologies can often save churches and ministries money, but knowing what convergence is and how to apply it is the challenge.

There are many ways to define converging technologies, but for our purposes let's keep it simple. Think back to the days when you traveled with your technology and how heavy your backpack used to be. I travel frequently and used to travel with a laptop, an iPhone, an iPad, a digital camera, a GPS device, all the batteries, carrying cases, mounts and cables to go with all of that, plus removable media, flash drives and project files I needed to work on. Oh, and printed out copies of my travel docs, boarding passes, itineraries, etc. It's amazing with all that stuff in my backpack I'm not permanently hunched over.

Today I travel with far less. I have a Microsoft Surface and an iPhone. That's it. My Surface is my laptop and tablet and my iPhone is my camera and GPS. Any files I need are stored in the cloud, and my iPhone is my boarding pass, Sky Club pass, and contains all my other travel documents. With Apple Pay, in many cases my iPhone is also my wallet. My back is most grateful for all this convergence.

In this case convergence is good, but converging technologies can also be bad. A lawn mower is a great tool but I'm not sure trying to converge a lawn mower, trimmer, edger, blower and leaf vac all into a single device would be a great idea, nor should we try. In this case separate tools for each need is best.

Converging technologies on the other hand can [save ministries thousands of dollars](#). Many times I see separate networks for separate functions, but thanks to convergence that is no longer necessary. Ready for a little controversy? Take the example of an audio/video network for an auditorium and the data network for the entire organization. The A/V network has to work reliably for eight hours a week while the data network has to work for 168 hours a week. With the right network engineering you can use a single network and route all traffic over the same switches as opposed to buying two sets of switches, one set for A/V and one for data.

The irony here is many times the A/V network works better than the data network. The A/V network always works but the data network struggles. Both are important and convergence can help make both rock solid for 168 hours each week. I know the A/V purists are going to say it is dangerous to combine traffic and mix networks, and I get it. It isn't good when the mic doesn't work on Sunday morning or the projection screen goes blank because of network issues. It also isn't good when the accounting department can't process payroll because the data network is down.

Granted, you could spend twice as much money and have separate networks. My encouragement is with the proper network engineering, infrastructure costs can be cut in half, and thanks to convergence the A/V and IT folks can all reap the benefits while saving the organization money. Network convergence is not like the lawn mower, this is making your backpack lighter.

Jonathan Smith is the Director of Technology at Faith Ministries in Lafayette, IN, an author and frequent conference speaker. You can reach Jonathan at jsmith@faithlafayette.org and follow him on Twitter @JonathanESmith.

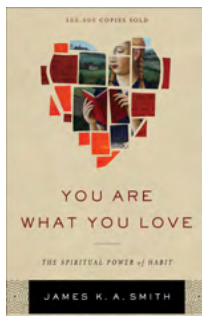


NEW YEAR, NEW GEAR!

So: You bought small Christmas gifts for people on your worship team—good for you! But what about the “gifts” for the worship stage or the worship team’s green room? Why not start off the New Year by making sure that your worship stage or green room is well equipped with useful items? I’ve already vetted all the options, read the reviews and chosen the perfect products.

1. Start a worship library: Here are some great titles your team should read. These are “easy” reads, but still intellectually rich and lasting.

- [For All God's Worth](#) - N.T. Wright
- [You Are What You Love](#) - James K.A. Smith
- [A Brief History of Christian Worship](#) - James F. White
- [The War of Art](#) - Steven Pressfield
- [Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration](#) - Ed Catmull



2. Low Profile Folding Guitar Stand: Every worship ministry could use a couple of extra [guitar stands](#), especially the kind that break down for easy transport but still can hold the instrument safely. This particular stand is a personal favorite.

3. [Throat-Coat Tea](#) is world-famous with singers in every genre of music. It’s perfect for worship leaders or anyone that’s just “not feeling it” early Sunday morning. And having [a hot water kettle](#) for warming up water to drinkable warmth is a must!!



4. [Theo Wheel](#) (a simple music theory tool): This really well-designed Theo Wheel makes music theory easy. It’s a must around any worship green room or in the office of a music leader.

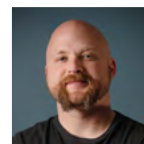
5. Turn any guitar player into part of the rhythm section: Check out this [fun foot-tambourine](#). By just stomping your foot, you will turn yourself into the drummer you’ve always wanted to be. Bonus: Check out this [very cool ankle shaker](#).



6. [In-Ear Monitors](#). Nowadays, most musicians are using in-ear monitors to listen to what they are playing on stage. I can’t count the number of times I have left my monitors at home, and it’s always a great idea to have another extra pair. These in-ear monitors are really affordable and have incredible reviews! Tip: I suggest buying the clear ones since they are the most in-demand and least obstructive on the stage.



Mike O'Brien holds a B.A. in Music from Kennesaw State University and a Master of Worship Studies from the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies. He has worked as a producer, engineer and mixer at Lucko Sound Studio, and with a collective of 25+ musicians called Poured Out Like Wine. Together, they produced seven albums with over 15 published songs with Vineyard Worship USA. He lives in Atlanta, GA, with his wife, Susan, and son, Ezekiel. You can reach Mike at vineband@hotmail.com



"PRINTING TECHNOLOGY" IS NOT AN OXYMORON!

We've got truly extraordinary technology available to the church today, but amid all that, don't forget some of the tried and true tech tools that have been around the longest and are the technology workhorses in the church office, often overlooked. What I'm referring to here is printing technology: the copier/printing systems you use to create the pieces you print.

Why printing technology is important

Printing on paper is still important in many churches, even if a church is into high-tech presentation software, social media and web-based ministry. Printed bulletins are still extremely important to visitors—they think of them as the “program” for what will be going on in a service that might not make sense otherwise. Additionally important are your connection cards, visitor cards, or prayer cards, whatever you want to call them. They are essential for visitors to give you their contact information and to give you a way to [follow up with them](#).

Both items are best printed in-house because of lower costs and because of the ability to make last minute changes. To do in-house printing, you need a printer, and now we'll talk about a less familiar printing technology to churches: a way to do printing other than with a color copier.

Copier/printing systems

The technology has been around a long time—many of you may remember the old Risograph, Ricoh or Duplo digital duplicators. These were inexpensive workhorses in the church office, but their print quality was poor, and they could only print one color at a time.

New printing technology that developed from digital duplicators is particularly interesting because it is an ink-based system that prints without heat and prints in four colors.

Why the no heat technology is a big deal

Of particular interest, the RISO Corporation has developed advanced large machines (called their [ComColor line](#)) that use ink without heat instead of toner with heat to produce the printed product. Here is

an example of the cost savings, though on a large scale, the difference is significant:

#1 Copiers use more energy per unit than any other piece of office equipment.

#2 An example of the energy consumption of copiers vs. a RISO printer in a business that had 20 machines:

The heat-based printer energy costs were \$9,807.

The RISO heat-less machine energy costs were **\$309**.

Cost to the environment

Though this is not a direct cost to the church, all churches care about the costs of what they use to the environment.

RISO digital printing systems use soy-based and rice-bran based inks. In contrast with toner, which is a petrochemical-based compound that you are advised not to allow to come in contact with your skin or to inhale. To quote from another White Paper: “Soy inks contain lower levels of VOCs (volatile organic compounds); use of soy inks results in lower amounts of air pollution through reduction of toxic emissions. Unlike electro photographic printers, RISO printers are free from ozone emissions, toner particle emissions, silica dust and other air pollutants. Also, RISO printers do not emit greenhouse gases.”

Because these systems don't generate heat while they are running, they reduce the need for additional air conditioning. Also, because the machines don't give off toxic fumes like copiers do, they can share an office with church staff instead of needing to be placed in a separate room. To find out more about this way of printing you can look up a local supplier of the ComColor ink-jet systems at the link [here](#).

Sometimes the most important technology is what we use the most

This is one example of some of the new technology available for churches for a piece of equipment you use daily, but there are many other tools available in the print industry to help your church. Not only can they make life easier for you, but also more efficient: Cutting edge tools can make your church ministry more effective.

Yvon Prehn's ministry to church communicators has two parts: effectivechurchcom.com, a site of FREE templates, strategy and resources, and churchcomtraining.com, a Church Communicators Online Training School.



DO YOU HAVE AN ONLINE PRESENCE?

STAND OUT WITH OUTREACH DIGITAL

14 DAY FREE TRIAL

OUTREACHDIGITAL

Your Church is Unique. Your Website & Social Media Should Reflect That.

Update your online presence and attract new visitors.



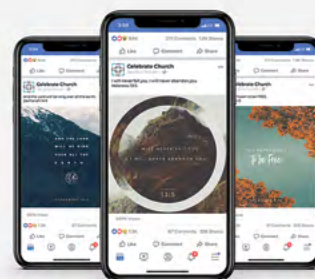
New Website

Church website builder & hosting



Church Graphics Library

Unlimited downloads



Daily Facebook Posts

\$19 per month value

Enhance your Church's Digital Ministry:

Outreach.com/digital

CYBER CON ARTISTS THRIVE AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

With Christmas and the shopping season now behind us, it's time to kick back in the recliner and make the most of all those \$1.96 Walmart "doorbuster" movies you risked life and limb for on Black Friday. I took my own advice recently and re-watched *Ocean's Eleven*, a classic American heist movie. Movies like *Ocean's Eleven* may keep us entertained and on the edge of our seats, however they also serve as a realistic parallel to the modern-day cyber con artists lurking among us, and their disgusting and fraudulent 'movie script' scams don't end after the holidays.

While names may have been changed, the movie script below is based on actual events.

EXPOSITION—Exploit the weak and vulnerable (i.e., children/elderly).

An elderly Mr. Jones was enjoying a peaceful dinner at home with his wife when his home phone rang, interrupting his meal. Upon answering it, a gentleman introducing himself as "Frank" began asking him questions about his computer. Although Mr. Jones is normally cautious with phone sales calls, on this night Mr. Jones had an emotional response because (ironically) he had experienced recent troubles with his computer while online shopping for the holidays.

RISING ACTION—Start small. Remain patient. Build up trust.

After about 20 minutes of pleasant back-and-forth conversation, Mr. Jones agreed to purchase a monthly computer service plan for \$7/month. Under this arranged plan, Frank's organization would remotely initiate regular system performance checks and routine maintenance.

Once a month (for five months!), phone calls pursued, and detailed computer health updates were provided as agreed to. During this time, Mr. Jones noted that Frank was always very courteous, polite and would routinely address him by name and caringly ask about his family. Most noticeably for Mr. Jones, during these months, he saw improved performance and stability on his PC. Without reservation, he continued his normal computer habits that included banking, bidding on eBay, etc. He admitted being extremely satisfied with the service and attention he was receiving from Frank.

Let the victim win at first. Build sympathy and create a false sense of power.

About six months into their agreement, Frank, on the monthly routine call, would break the news to Mr. Jones

that his technology consulting company was going out of business and that he was entitled to a \$150 refund. With a relationship solidly established, although puzzled and saddened by the news, Mr. Jones proceeded to move forward with Frank's instructions on the refund—allowing Frank back on to his system one last time so that together they could deposit the \$150 refund back into his account.

As the transfer of money was happening, Mr. Jones noticed that instead of \$150.00 getting directly transferred into his account, Frank "accidentally" deposited \$15,000 into Mr. Jones account. Upon seeing the wrong amount, Mr. Jones quickly called the mistake to Frank's attention. As if on cue...(Mr. Jones had taken the cue), Frank's tone quickly changed, and he became frantic.

CLIMAX—Change the tempo to create urgency to complete the heist.

Mr. Jones recalled Frank acting scared and that Frank repeatedly expressed how his organization was going to sue him for the full \$15,000, and how it would cost him his house, his job and possibly his family. Frank desperately pleaded with Mr. Jones to authorize the \$15,000 transfer back to the account to immediately reverse the mistake.

FALLING ACTION—At this point, Mr. Jones said "no," and that he would head to the bank to get the situation resolved for Frank. Frank didn't like this and demanded that the call not end!

RESOLUTION—By ending the call and saying no to Frank's urgent request, Mr. Jones was fortunate. He drove to his bank the following morning and explained the situation. As the banker investigated his accounts, the banker explained how Frank didn't receive any outside money into his account at all; the \$15,000 he saw transferred over to his checking account was deceitfully moved from his own home equity line of credit. "Frank" had invested months into this con job in hopes to trick Mr. Jones into laundering **his own money**.

It's better to watch actors and actresses in a heist movie rather than being one of the actors in your own real-life modern-day cyber con artists robbery movie. Leave your computer's security to a trusted professional/product, and trust your gut. If an [email or call seems hard-to-trust](#), you should not trust it. Use your common sense (and strong antivirus security!), and be your own star-of-the-show!

Steven Sundermeier is the owner of [Thirtyseven4, LLC](#), a leading provider of antivirus/security software. With 17 years of experience in the cybersecurity field, he is one of the nation's leading experts in virus, malware and other threats. Before founding Thirtyseven4 in 2009, Steven worked in a number of roles in the antivirus industry dating back to 1999.





Giving Station

5 RELIABLE CHURCH-GIVING TOOLS WE LOVE

Upgrade Your Congregation's Giving!

by MinistryTech Special Report

Even while the church's mission remains unchanged throughout all generations, its practices will always be subject to change. For example, tithes and offerings: These days, those people in the seats who pass the offering plate without dropping in a check are still giving—often more generously than ever before! In our increasingly digital age, church online giving platforms have become a popular option for churches looking to connect with members who no longer carry cash or checks to church. If you want to maintain consistent levels of giving at your church, don't let the offering plate pass them by without presenting an alternative way to give.

Online giving platforms offer your church members a

convenient way to give, and also encourage consistent giving each week. Churchgoers have the freedom to decide how much they want to donate and how frequently, and even have the choice to automate their

giving by setting up recurring gifts. From debit cards to credit cards to automatic bank withdrawals, church online giving platforms make tithes and offerings easy for everyone.

There are some great giving platforms to choose from that can be tweaked to fit your church's specific needs. But with all the options out there, how do

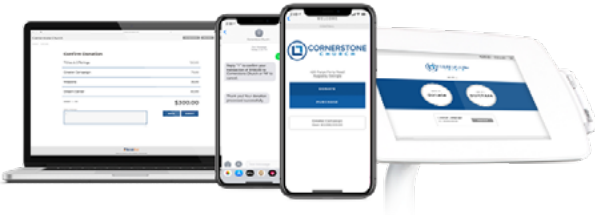
you know which one is right for your church?

We've rounded up our five favorite platforms to help you provide your congregation with the option to give online and mobile.

"WE'VE ROUNDED UP OUR
FIVE FAVORITE PLATFORMS
TO HELP YOU PROVIDE YOUR
CONGREGATION WITH THE OPTION
TO GIVE ONLINE AND MOBILE."

SECUREGIVE

SecureGive has a 15-year track record of helping churches grow their giving to further their missions. With cutting edge technology, expert implementation and biblical stewardship strategy, you're resourced to grow giving in a sustainable way.



The five-platform digital giving ecosystem is built to make giving easy for anyone at any time, driving engagement to the next level.

Every church can create a custom plan to implement the tools that will serve their specific needs, including online, mobile, text to give, giving kiosks, and check scanning with automatic bank deposit. These five platforms are managed from a single place making reporting easy and saving administrative hours.

From a pricing standpoint, SecureGive stands out by providing tremendous value. Tiered monthly plans paired with industry-leading transaction rates (1.75% for debit and 2.5% for credit, plus \$0.30) keep costs low, which means more money goes directly to ministry. Secure Give provides unique giving kiosks that drive rates even lower: 1.5% for debit and 2.0% for credit.

SecureGive has built their platform with an emphasis on enterprise-grade security and infrastructure: donor information is safe, proving (as their website says) "confidence your church can always give with a 99.999% up time."



SecureGive provides a one-stop, full-scale digital giving solution, world class client support, and in-depth resources and coaching to ensure your church's giving is easy and growing.

73%

of churches using SecureGive grew their digital giving last year.

Ministry shouldn't be limited by stagnant giving.

Grow your giving, guaranteed.



JOE CHAMPION

PASTOR: CELEBRATION CHURCH
AUSTIN, TX

"For the last 4 years, our digital giving has averaged 30% growth year over year. We couldn't have done it without SecureGive."

 **SECUREGive** | securegive.com/grow



Church Management Software that grows with you.

TouchPoint Software partners with you to engage your people, resource your mission, and grow fully devoted followers of Christ.

Visit touchpointsoftware.com/features to learn more about our features and integrations.

TOUCHPOINT

[TouchPoint](#) is a powerful cloud-based church management system that equips leaders to grow fully devoted followers of Christ. TouchPoint is designed for mid-to-large churches looking for a ChMS solution that is off-the-shelf AND customizable.

Its best-in-class fully-integrated mobile app helps with contact records, membership management, volunteer management, child check-in, discipleship groups, ministry engagement, contributions, events and media.

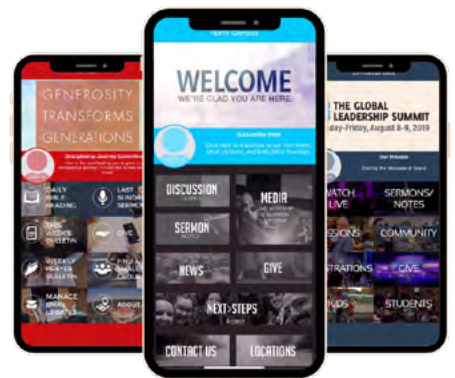
TRAINING: TouchPoint offers remote webinar-style online training. They also have the capability to come on-site for more personalized training (which is optimal for churches with a larger staff). They also offer extensive online documentation and on-demand training videos to support users at any time.

DATA CONVERSION: If you are concerned about the conversion process in implementing a new system, TouchPoint developers are skilled at moving your existing data into a new database with minimal loss.

MOBILE APP: TouchPoint currently offers the only church app that lets you manage and communicate

with your congregation in a unified, compelling experience. Members can update their profile, register for events, see

giving statements, update their communications preferences, find a small group, and more! Communications staff love the ability to schedule sliding banners that announce important news to your congregation. Pull in media audio/video feeds from wherever they are hosted (YouTube, Vimeo, Soundcloud, Apple podcasts, etc.).

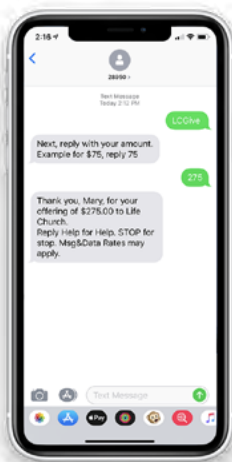


MOBILEAXEPT

The people at [mobileAxept](#) saw the future as far back as 2006, when they first developed their product. Client focus is in their DNA. They pride themselves on availability from the moment of first-contact; mobileAxept is available to provide adoption strategies, answer questions, and troubleshoot by phone or email. One user remarked: "We signed on the dotted line and their team stayed with us each step to be sure our roll out was a success, helped us trouble shoot with our less-tech-savvy members, and they continue to check on us to be sure we are pleased."

mobileAxept provides solutions that make giving, communicating, and connecting effective and convenient for ministries and congregations. As the world continues to

move toward a digital-payment-only society the need for ministries and congregations to adapt has never been greater. A Norwegian pastor saw this trend and pioneered mobileAxept text giving for his church in 2006. He knew the world was changing, and subsequent studies



proved that when giving is convenient, more people give. Soon, pastors around the world sought out his text-to-give solution for their churches and their GiveNow product is considered by some as the gold standard for churches everywhere.

Now headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn., mobileAxept serves some of the largest and fastest growing churches in the United States. In addition to their GiveNow product they have added ReachNow and ConnectNow to their suite of services. Combining [mobileAxept's solutions](#) allows ministries to increase engagement with their members and visitors.



Online giving shouldn't be a struggle.

SwiftGive™ allows donors to give in a few clicks, ensuring increased donations for your ministry.

LEARN MORE

mobile **Axept**[®]
Pioneers of mobile giving

PUSHPAY

In addition to the features you'd expect in a mobile giving app, PushPay's website also touts a management tool: their "Donor Development" feature.



"A complete, robust dashboard that harnesses your giving data to show you where every member of your church is on their giving journey with your church. Not only can you view the complete picture of your donors, you can see individual donors and get customized next-steps to help you invite those people into deeper participation with your church, all thanks to intelligent features like:

- An at-risk donor view that helps surface the people who need pastoral care
- A comprehensive view of donor health at your church
- Customized next-steps for individual donors (with recommended actions and resources)

PushPay does strong work in connecting people's stories with the nuts-and-bolts of giving and mobile security: Pastor Danny Anderson of Emmanuel Church in Greenwood, Ind., set out to raise \$50,000 to support an orphanage in Haiti. Since they were already using PushPay to collect donations and offerings, they were able to easily add this need as a potential fund for people to contribute toward.

Even though Emmanuel was firmly resolved to make this dream a reality, they were not prepared for the response. The simplicity of using *PushPay* to make donations, coupled with the ease of sharing the cause



To
fully fulfill
the Great
Commission

RESOURCES FOR CHURCH COMMUNICATORS



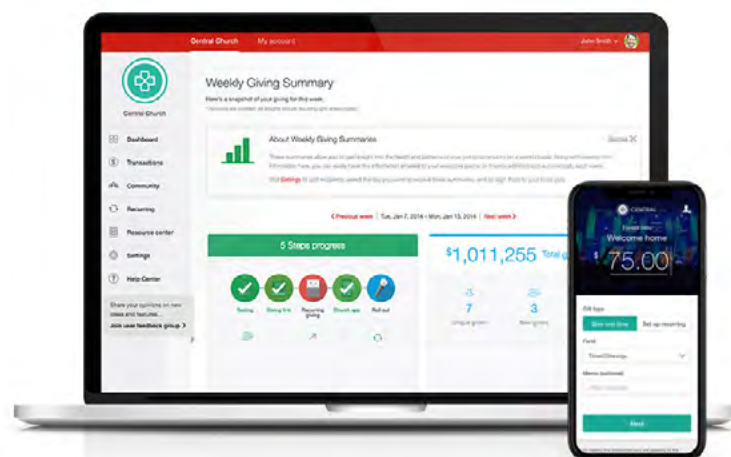
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with friends, helped the drive spread like wildfire. Within 24 hours of kicking off their campaign, they had raised nearly half of the needed \$50,000 through PushPay. And by the time the campaign was over, they'd raised more than \$100,000!

For a full list of their features, please see [their website](http://theirwebsite).





EASYTITHE

Providing donors the power to easily manage giving benefits your ministry as much as the ability to give online. This is a strong point with easyTithe. With the mobile app, donors can create recurring donations in seconds. Inspire spontaneous generosity on-site by connecting with your donors and prompting a one-time gift for a specific fund or goal.

In a few short steps, your donors can download a mobile giving app that will save their information and allow them to manage their one-time or recurring donations in seconds. Mobile donations have never been easier than with the powerful and easy mobile giving app from easyTithe. With the iOS or Android App, donors can manage their online giving directly from their phones. Members can update payment methods, select specific funds, and manage the frequency at which they choose to give.

Their *Resources* section provides an abundance of resources to help churches promote and donors use the mobile giving app. This includes access to posters, support, how-to documents for members, bulletin inserts and social media graphics to help share the message about your mobile giving app with your donors.

Their Mobile Giving App is free with all easyTithe plans, providing the following:

- Donors can give on their iOS or Android Device.
- Saves payment information so donating on-the-go can be done in a matter of seconds.
- Review giving history easily from the overview.
- All the capabilities of donating online made even easier with a local mobile app.

- easyTithe also integrates with the MinistryOne ChMS app.

Using a Mobile Giving App with your church's giving platform can help you reach your mission goals. Check out [easyTithe](#). MT

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HOW TO START RECORDING AND SHORTEN THE LEARNING CURVE

A Proper Recording Starter Kit



by Caleb Neff

"I think I'm just gonna start recording some stuff."

I said these words in the winter of 2005. I bought a \$499 "Recording starter kit" with a microphone, headphones, interface, and probably one of those acoustic foam mic shields that doesn't do anything. All in one kit! I was ready to go!

"How hard can it be?" I thought. I had never been to a session in a recording studio. I had never run live sound, didn't know the basic functions of a mixer, and wasn't very computer literate. The extent of my producer knowledge was to point the microphone in the

direction of the noise. (I had seen that in movies.)

But something about those late nights of layering sounds (after the initial late-late nights of Googling "Why don't I have any sound") hooked me. So here I am 15 years later, still obsessed with doing something half as good as the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*.

I've created this "proper" starter kit to help you save money, but more importantly, time. Because if you're not careful you'll spend more time on forums and futzing around trying to figure out your gear than actually making music.

Here's What You *Really* Need:

1. A "good enough" computer. You need RAM, lots of it. When you look at a software program and it says 16GB recommended, do that. If you can upgrade what's in your computer, do that. A [good SSD](#) (which can be internal or external) will give you a place to put all those gigabytes of sound you're making.
2. A DAW (digital audio workstation). This is the program you are going to record into and mix from. It doesn't need to be [Pro Tools](#) (the most famous one) but Pro Tools is fine, and it probably shouldn't be a free or "LE" version of anything because they are feature limited. The easiest to learn full-featured programs seem to be [Logic](#), [Studio One](#), and, if you're into more electronic music and loops and stuff, Ableton.
3. An interface - You plug all your mics and direct signals into this and it turns that sound into digital information that your computer can read and play back. You need as many inputs as you plan on recording at the same time. Unless you're gonna be recording acoustic drums, two microphone inputs ([like this one](#)) is probably good. (Also, if you read some nerdy stuff somewhere about converters, ignore it. No one makes bad converters anymore, so unless you're opening a commercial mastering facility, you're fine.)
4. Monitors/headphones. You need headphones to wear while recording so you can hear what you're playing along with, and monitors to listen back in your room. You're probably (like most



of us) working in a less than ideal acoustic environment, so here's the trick: You want [decent small monitors](#) (with no subwoofer) and [great headphones](#). Your headphones are immune to the acoustics of your room, so listening back and forth between them and your monitors will

be a helpful way to get a decent grip on what you're doing. I don't recommend a subwoofer when you're starting out because they tend to exacerbate acoustic issues in small rooms. As you move forward, taming the acoustics of your space is crucial, but I'm not going to spend time on it because

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I know it's not very exciting, and let's be honest, you want to buy a big shiny microphone.

5. Microphones.

Microphones are the ears that actually capture your sounds; they are the most crucial piece of gear in the chain. There's so much hype and heavy breathing about all the magic components of modern recording (we haven't even mentioned plug-ins) that we lose focus on the simple fact that whatever the mic hears, and how it hears it, is your record. You can smash and mangle it downstream, but the raw material delivered by the microphone you chose is what you have to work with.

With all that setup, if I just said *here's the mic you should get* I would be doing you no favors. There are hundreds of forums and articles listing off thousands of microphones that are "The Greatest," using words like smooth, buttery and even "creamy." Have you noticed the greatest mic

tends to be whatever that person currently owns?

The truth is: I don't know what style of music you like, what you want to record, what kind of voice you have, what space you have, or 100 other things that affect your decision, but don't worry, I know exactly what you should do.

audiotestkitchen.com is possibly the greatest practical resource to ever come along to the recording community. It's not just the whole idea that you can actually hear what microphones sound like—in a way that makes logical and scientific sense—the ear training that's going to happen as a natural byproduct of your ATK mic selection process is actually going to make you a better engineer right out of the gate.

No one knows what a creamy microphone is: Did you dunk it in ranch dressing? At least now, if you think you need a U87, that feeling is based on something more substantive than seeing it in a music video.

Remember, the whole idea is to have fun and create. Don't spend half your creative energy wishing you had different gear or searching the dark web for the trick that's going to unlock everything. Make music, and enjoy the process. **MT**



Caleb Neff is a producer, mix engineer, songwriter, and guitar player in Southwest, FL. His mom forced him to get guitar lessons when he was 9. He has been recording artists and bands for over a decade, and brings musical and technical expertise, vision, and crucial people skills to every project he works on. Visit his site here.



CAN YOU SPOT BACKGROUND CHECK RED FLAGS?

*Keys to Interpreting
What You Read*

by Daniel Raley

There are many hurdles toward selecting quality employees or volunteers; passing a background check shouldn't be one of them.

Background checks are often the final litmus test before extending a job offer. They are—rightly so—an increasingly common requirement in ministries, hiring procedures and vetting policies for volunteers. A thorough background investigation, such as one conducted by a nationally-accredited Consumer Reporting Agency (CRA) like [Protect My Ministry](#), will deliver information on a person's criminal record, credit history, drug test record, education verification and reference checks.

Many ministries whose employees work with children or other vulnerable populations also require that candidates pass an abuse safety training course in addition to a background

check. More and more ministries are incorporating mandatory child safety training for all of their childcare workers and volunteers who participate in Vacation Bible School and after school programs.

There Is No Such Thing as Perfect

It's unlawful to run a background check on a candidate without his/her consent. It's also totally

normal to have some reservations about agreeing to a background investigation. With so many misconceptions about background checks, it's hard to know what information is being gathered about a job candidate, how it's being assessed, and why it can affect candidates' employability.

Ministries need to be aware that even the best applicant on paper may not seem so squeaky clean after a background check. It's important that your ministry has a standardized policy when it comes to identifying 'red flags' that will disqualify someone from employment or

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volunteerism. Even 'red flags' such as behavior or character traits need to be thoughtfully weighed as they could expose your church to increased risk.

Common Red Flags

The professionals at [Protect My Ministry](#) have identified several common red flags that eliminate candidates from consideration. Here's what they are and what they could indicate for your church or religious organization:

- **A violent criminal record.**

If you operate a church where your employees and/or volunteers interact with children in any way, this is a major red flag. Any candidate with convictions for crimes against a person, especially a sex crime, should NEVER be allowed to work with or near children. Child and youth ministries should also be wary of individuals with convictions for child abuse or who have had a court order to remove children from their home issued against them. Drug-related convictions also warrant additional vetting; it may be in your organization's best interest to find an applicant with substance abuse convictions a job that does not come in contact with any children. Similar precautions should be taken for jobs that include contact with vulnerable populations like the elderly or people with disabilities or special needs.

- **Fraud or theft convictions.**

Applicants with financial crimes like bankruptcies, thefts and



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identity theft on their records should not be considered for any position that handles church money or exposes them to other members' personal financial information. Identity theft is big business. A report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) shows that an estimated 17.6 million people in the U.S. were victims of at least one incident of identity theft in

2014. That breaks down to about 7 percent of us! Find another job opportunity or volunteer position for this person.

- **A criminal conviction that occurred more than 10 years ago.** These results don't often turn up in a typical court records check, but they may be uncovered through interviews or reference checks. It's important to consider how

much time has passed since the crime(s) occurred, current character references, steady employment, and whether or not the person has permanent housing. A well-researched hiring and screening policy that establishes clear guidelines on how all candidates should be treated during the applicant phase is extremely helpful and will help keep your ministry out of legal trouble should someone attempt to sue you for discrimination.

- **Lying on a resume.** It's not uncommon for people to job hop these days. In fact, millennials do it fairly regularly. Job hopping or gaps in employment, though, may indicate that a candidate is unreliable or always looking for the "next big thing." You will certainly want to weigh the cost of turnover before employing someone like this, and the disruption this could cause to your church's overall mission. Additionally, an employment gap on a person's resume may mean they were fired and don't want you to know. This is not necessarily a bad thing—people get fired for all sorts of reasons—but you definitely want to know up front why the applicant was terminated from his/her previous job. Finally, lying about your education or degrees or certifications should not be tolerated at all.
- **Poor credit history.** How a person handles his/her finances is a direct reflection of how responsible she/he is. This may not be of utmost concern for most of the jobs within your ministry, but if you're considering an applicant for any sort of church leadership or financial or security position, it's something you want cleared up before green-lighting an offer.

Best Practices

Implementing background checks is one thing, knowing what to do with the results is another.

If your ministry doesn't already have an established policy that defines what 'red flags' will disqualify an applicant from consideration, then it's in your best interest to treat everyone the same. That means if a candidate for employment or volunteerism can't pass a background check, they shouldn't get the job.

Although strict, this approach makes the most sense. It protects your current employees and clients and helps keep your campus safe.

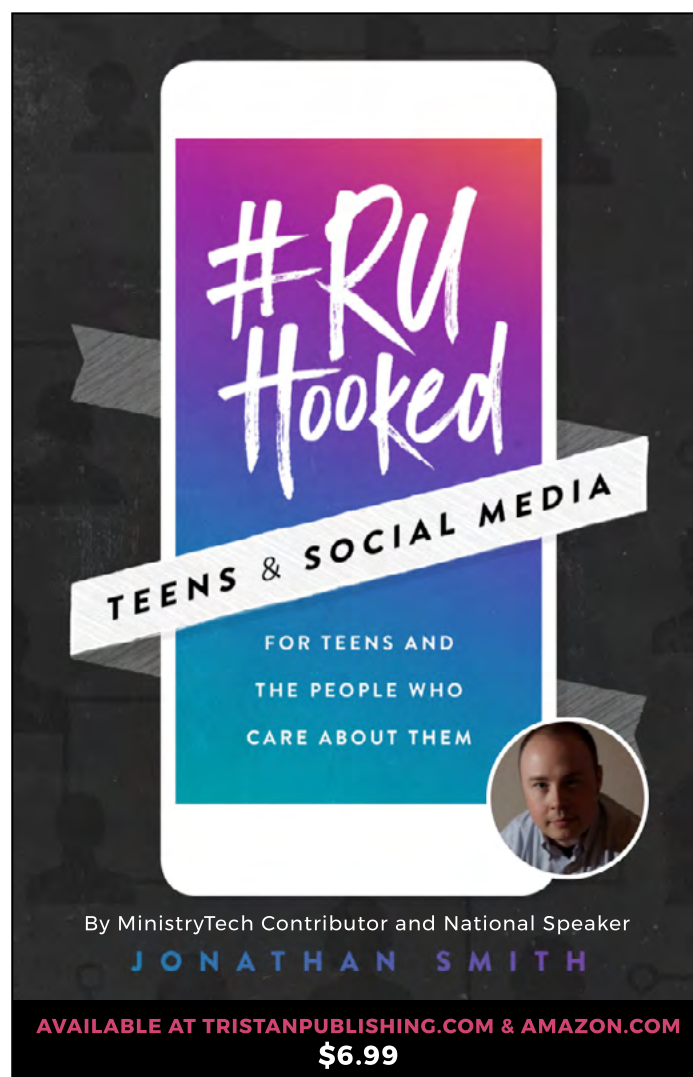
If, however, you are considering updating your

hiring and screening policy, and are looking for ways to incorporate more people with criminal pasts into your workforce, the site called *Active Screening* has some great advice:

- [Four Surefire Ways for Your Small Business to Prevent a Discriminatory Hiring Lawsuit](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself From an EEOC Lawsuit](#)
- [Screening and the Recruiting Process: Who is Responsible?](#)

Still have questions? [Protect My Ministry](#) can help, or you can [sign up for FREE instructional videos here](#). **MT**

Daniel Raley is a Marketing Director for Ministry Brands, a software company dedicated to empowering faith-based organizations in a digital world. When he's not helping churches use technology to further their vision, you'll find him spending time with his wife and sons, fishing, enjoying the outdoors, or actively volunteering in the student ministry at his church. He's thankful and excited to be a part of the Ministry Brands team and the work they do to help further God's Kingdom.



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by CHURCHLEADERS

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