

# Why We Switched...

By Steve Hewitt

**A**s we start this new column in CCMag, I am excited to see where it will lead. Each month we will interview a church and ask them to tell us why they switched from one Church Management Software (CMS) to another. Why did they switch? How did they make the decision? What were the benefits? To make things fair we will try to ask the same questions each month even though we might be interviewing a small church or a mega-church. In addition, while we will tell you what product the church switched too, we are going to keep the product they switched from anonymous. Every product, if it is still on the market, has a value and customers that love them. However, there is no one product that is right for everyone. Hopefully through this series, we will discover how a church comes to recognize the need for a change, and how they accomplish the switch.

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This month we interview Doug Gouley, Administrator of the Offering Computer at Bayfair Baptist Church in Pickering Ontario.

**1. Tell us a bit about your church. (Average attendance, ministries, how many people are involved in administration)**

Bayfair Baptist Church is a member of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches. We have two services on Sunday, one morning and one evening. Our children's' programs take place Sundays and Summer Daily Bible School which lasts for one week. Our adult ministry includes Sunday morning classes and Discipleship classes before services. We have a Wednesday evening Bible study and prayer meeting. In addition we have weekly men's and lady's Bible study groups, a monthly hot meal for single parents and children, missionaries in the field, Christianity Explored classes, a street ministry, Junior and Senior High youth groups and a Serenity Group.

We have one Chaplain and two Donarius Administrators. Our office staff includes one Church Administrator and one Office Administrator. Our church also administers the Bayfair Baptist Daycare with approximately 120 children daily.

**2. Indicate some of the reasons you were looking for new church management software. (We will NOT identify the CMS they switched FROM, but will refer to it as "Product X")**

We were running an old Windows 95 PC with "Product X" as the offering/donations program. Product X was difficult to learn and to operate and very hard to make corrections or fix errors. We found that it was not "forgiving". It was also a DOS based application. We had to pay for support, found reports were difficult to create, and income tax receipts were difficult to create and print. It was also difficult to maintain name and addresses changes. And, since it was time to retire our old computer, we decided to

look for a new offering program at the same time.

**3. Please describe how you decided to purchase your new CMS.**

**The answer should include these items:**

**a) How many companies/products did you investigate?**

We investigated five different programs. I sent screen dumps and features of each of the candidates to our church Tellers for evaluation before selecting one as a finalist.

**b) What other people were involved in the decision?**

We had several involved in the decision making process. I was the researcher who chose Donarius and demonstrated and recommended Donarius to five people and to the Chief Teller who would be using it to enter donations. Upon their approval and acceptance it went to our Board of Deacons (twelve) who approved the change and the purchase

**c) What was the determining factor?**

There were several things that helped us make the decision. Our tellers could not relate envelope numbers to donor names in our previous program. For privacy reasons, we do not want our Tellers to be able to relate envelope numbers to names and, depending on the password used, Donarius will not allow that. We found the ease of use by our tellers and the fact that Donarius was easy to administer were two of the determining factors. In addition we were impressed by Donarius' ability to create quick and easy reports (both in text and CSV formats). And, finally we appreciated Donarius' easy setup and ability to change General Ledger items. And, Donarius is Canadian; it "knows" Canadian taxes.

**d) How long did it take?**

It took about four or five months for us to make the decision to change from what we had, and to purchase Donarius. I chose to run 2 months "in parallel" to prove that everything worked as planned.

**4. How has using the new CMS impacted your ministry or your administration?**

Besides the features we have already mentioned, we found Donarius saved time. Since the program is much easier to use than "product X" it has not only saved us time, but frustration. And we have found Nuverb to be very responsive to our requests and they have implemented changes based upon our recommendations.

**5. Compare your previous and current software, in terms of:**

**a) What things you can or cannot do:**

We can now easily create reports and income tax receipts. Also, setup and reporting on General Ledger items and balances are quicker and easier. Also, before we couldn't re-assign and issue envelope numbers and still be able to issue income taxes to the old envelope numbers. Renumbering envelope numbers is quite easy as is reassigning unused envelope numbers

**b) How much time it takes:**

Donarius saves us a lot of time compared to "product X". It is very easy and therefore fast for us to train data entry tellers. Entering donations is quick and easy. We can quickly print bank deposits and audit reports of daily offerings. And, whenever updates to the program are sent from Nuverb, we find installing them easy.

**d) What problems you do or do you not encounter:**

Whenever we have had a problem or have not figured out how to do something (such as adding page



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numbers to reports) Nuverb was able to quickly fix our problem.

**6. What is the difference between the service you have now and before?**

**Especially:**

**a) How were problems handled and how long does it take to get an answer when you call or email the company:**

Whenever we have had a problem or question in using Donarius, they are handled by Nuverb almost immediately. My emails are answered the next day and fixes come quickly. I have asked for quite a few changes to Donarius and they have come quickly. One change, for example, needed quite a bit of programming (we did not want our tellers to be able to associate an envelope number with a donor's name) yet Nuverb handled our request quickly and without a charge. Whenever I have called with a problem, which has only been a few times, the problems have been addressed quickly.

**7. Did you purchase new hardware when you switched to your new CMS? If so, what did you use before, and what did you upgrade too?**

Yes, we purchased a new PC because our old computer was really old (running Windows 95 and needed to be replaced. We purchased a new Dell desktop that would run Windows XP Home and upgraded to Donarius at that time.

**Conclusion**

Time has proven that we made the correct choice.; the program is doing what we need. Nuverb support has continued at a high level.

For more information about Donarius from Nuverb, contact; Nuverb Systems Inc.

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