

Success Story

A Quick Summary

Profile

ABCCM is a non-profit Christian organization whose mission is to serve the needy in the Asheville, North Carolina vicinity.

System Requirements

With a large budget and a complex organizational structure, the need was for software that was flexible and comprehensive, yet easy to use.

Hardware & Software

Dell server with Microsoft Windows operating system. Four users. SouthWare GL, AP, PR, Cash Flow, ReportMate, SwiftMate.

Challenges

Accounting for the myriad operations of ABCCM is complicated due to having multiple ministries in multiple locations, all tracked separately and in combination. Funding from 230 churches, community sponsors and grantors must be properly dispersed.

Comments

"SouthWare fits us very well. It does everything we need right out of the box. It is so stable and the audit trails are wonderful."

--Chuck Arnold,
Chief Accountant



ABCCM was founded in 1969 by pastors and laymen from eight Asheville churches "seeking to have a common, unified response to the inequities around food, clothing, shelter and racism." Today there are hundreds of volunteers serving thousands of people in need. ABCCM's missions statement is "The Christian Ministry is a family of Christian congregations organized to provide individuals an opportunity to grow, mature and express their faith through fellowship and service for the joy set before us in Christ."

—Scott Rogers, Executive Director

"For I was hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me." —Matthew 25: 35,36

These words of Jesus speak of the comprehensive ministries of ABCCM. Sponsored by 230 churches of all denominations, with additional support from corporations, endowments and the community at large, ABCCM administers an annual budget of more than \$3.5 million, plus in-kind income of over \$8 million. Less than 7% goes for expenses and fund-raising, with 93% available for their ministries. Few organizations use their resources so responsibly.

Fifty-six paid employees plus hundreds of volunteers do the work of caring for the needy in the following ways:

The Crisis Ministry feeds the hungry with soup kitchens, groceries, clothing, household items, utility assistance, rental payments and other emergency services out of four physical locations.

The Shelter Ministry operates a men's shelter for 75 and a separate women's and children's shelter for 43, to provide temporary housing.

The Jail / Prison Ministry visits prisoners, sharing scriptural materials as well as lessons in life skills and reconciliation to aid re-entry into society.

The Medical Ministry provides free health services for those who cannot pay, including medical, dental and pharmacy services.

Many thousands of individuals are helped each year by these ministries, maintaining dignity, hope and care. Executive Director Rogers says "We put people in touch with what it means to be a good neighbor across social, cultural and economic lines. ABCCM brings the personhood of God through the volunteers as they first listen to and then seek to address the needs of their neighbors, one relationship at a time."



Chuck Arnold, Chief Accountant
Donna Kelly, Receivables & Payables Manager

Chuck, could you tell me about your background?

I was a CPA working for a Big 5 firm in Boston, and then for a ski company with the parent company in Oslo. After that I spent 20 years with a \$15 million textbook publisher.

Do you find any aspects of ABCCM's operation that complicate their accounting?

Yes, I do. We keep books on three companies, with over 800 accounts. The medical clinic is separate. A portion of ABCCM is broken off into a separate fund which holds all our investments and fixed assets. We track each ministry's operating results separately, pulling a P&L for each. I modified the cash flow statement that came with the system, just by referring to the manual.

What about the payroll?

It is excellent for us, because we can spread the salaries around in so many different accounts. Many payrolls don't do that. I like the payroll system a lot. It was well thought out and functions well.

Are there other specific aspects of the system you find especially good?

SouthWare just fits our needs very well. We use fund accounting and there isn't anything we can't do. We're going to start using project accounting to track the cost of every grant. I really like the cash flow system. We have close to 20 cash accounts. It tracks them all and keeps them reconciled. We use all of its features and everything integrates seamlessly into it. We use SouthWare ReportMate whenever we have a need. I just reformatted the financial statements with no problem. I used the manuals and then just worked it out.



ABCCM, Working to Make a Difference



ABCCM Stewardship Office



Donations Center



Crisis Ministry



Medical Ministry



Women's & Children's Shelter



Men's Shelter

What are SouthWare's greatest strengths overall?

It is exceptionally stable and I don't think you can overstate the huge importance of that. In my last company, the software was going down all the time, which makes it difficult to do your job. Nothing has been customized for us and it does everything we want. The audit trails are wonderful!

How dependent are you on Carolina Cipher's support?

I have been to some Cipher classes, which were helpful. We call them whenever we have a problem but that is very seldom. We enjoy a good relationship with them.

What advice would you give for evaluating software?

Many software companies invest more in the demo disk than the actual software, so be sure what you see is what you are going to get. SouthWare is always careful to describe their products accurately and thoroughly.