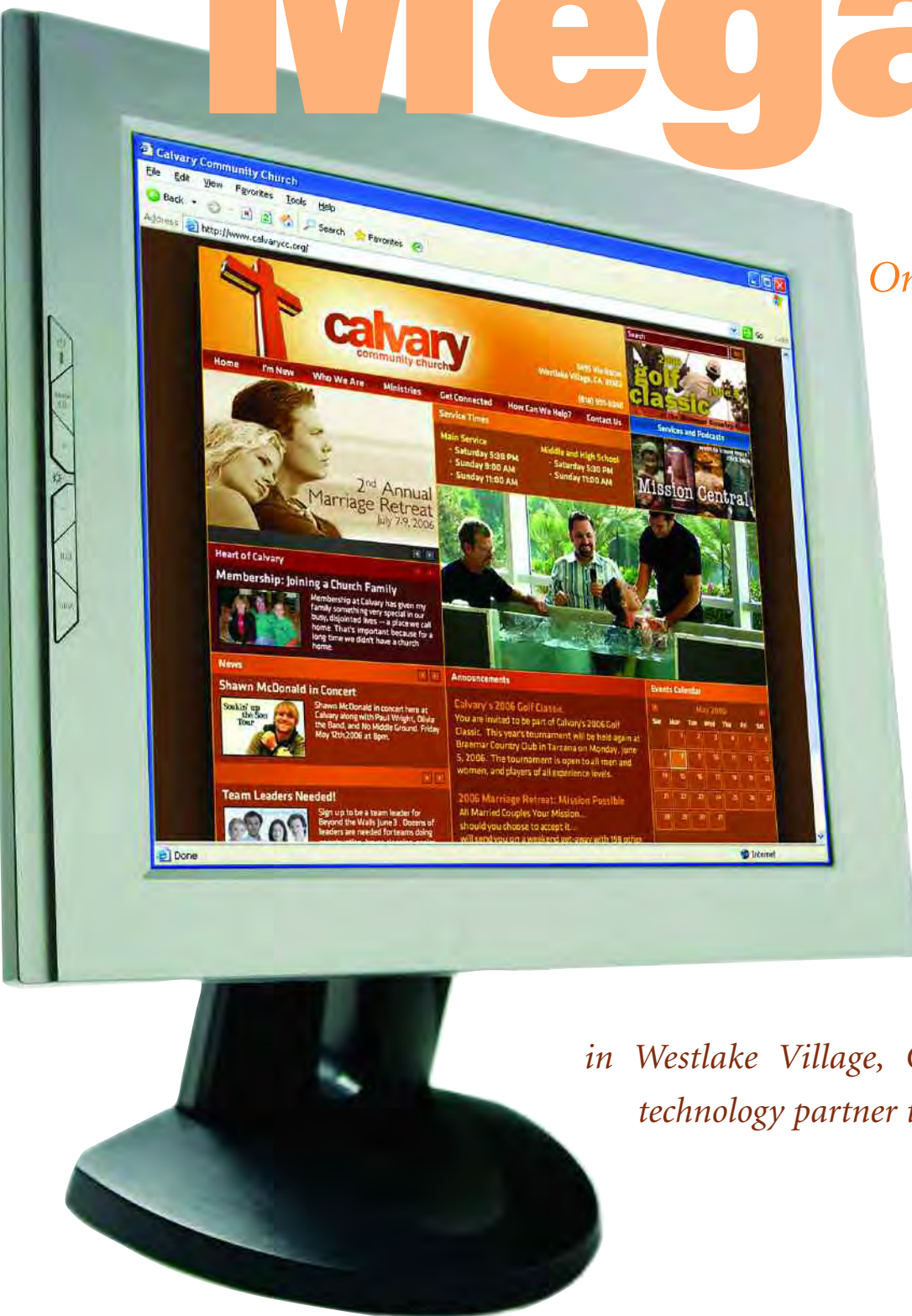


Megachurch Need

One Thriving Megachurch

No matter the size of the church, people want a personal touch, and the staff needs to be sure they get it. When your church is growing rapidly, keeping up the personal touch can be a challenge. Here's how Calvary Community Church (www.calvarycc.org)

in Westlake Village, California, looked for a technology partner to help.



Churches Mega Solutions

Lays it All on the Line to Uncover the Right Technology Partner.

First the Good News: The church was growing! More people were attending each weekend and responding to the pastor's call to become more involved.

Then Came the Not-So-Good News: The church was quickly losing contact with its members, both new and old, and was searching for ways to increase communication, encourage small groups participation, and get people involved in outreach of all levels.

From humble beginnings in a small restaurant, Calvary Community Church (CCC) has seen its share of positive changes since that first service on Easter Sunday in 1977. Today, nearly 5,000 people join in the three weekend worship celebrations. Key to the recent growth is the leadership of Brad Johnson, who joined the community as senior pastor in 2003. Prior to becoming the primary teacher and senior leader for Calvary, he was a teaching pastor at Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California.

When Johnson came on board, he brought the vision to become a "purpose-driven" church and put five purposes in place to restructure the church. These purposes are showcased on the Web site, talked about in church, and used to guide the activities of the community:

- **Bringing People In...**
to a relationship with Jesus and their new spiritual family.
- **Building People Up...**
as they begin living the way Jesus created us to live.
- **Training People For...**
serving in areas of their abilities and passion.
- **Sending People Out...**
to impact the world with the life-changing news of Jesus.
- **All For The Glory Of God.**

“Calvary Community Church has seen its share of positive changes since its first service in 1977.

Today, nearly 5,000 people join in the weekly worship celebrations.”



Calvary Community Church (CCC) in Westlake Village, California is a "purpose driven" church. (www.calvarycc.org)

CCC has developed a powerful ministry connection process to handle the administrative duties of handling and connecting people within the ministry of its church. Ministry Team Coordinators (MTCs) for each department within the church assist in making sure no one falls through the cracks. (see diagram on page 7)

Here is an example:

MTC Michal Galvin is CCC's Community World (or Missions trip) Department administrator. Michal obtains all the leads from weekend services and other sources, and the Ministry Development team enters them into ACS. Michal then assigns the appropriate "Connector." Connectors are the various volunteers who assess and connect interested individuals with mission leaders or other ministry and small groups.

For example, if the MTC gets a card filled out by John Smith stating he wants to go on a mission trip to Uganda in December, the info is entered into ACS and then Michael assigns connector Travis Mendal to call John. All the follow up assignments that are given to Travis are available to him online in Access ACS. Travis would call John and discuss the ministry opportunity with him. Travis would then record John's response online, enabling Michal to place John in the group or shift him to another ministry more appropriate to his needs. If it is not the right time for John, then Michal can place him on a long term call back assigned to Travis.

By having a specific plan for handling interests in various programs, CCC can make sure that all who express interest are contacted and kept track of, ensuring that every person who shows interest in a program will be called and included. Web access via Access ACS is an integral part of Calvary's overall plan to make everyone feel like a part of Calvary's community. It also provides historical tracking, makes the connecting process smoother, and lets volunteers work from anywhere.



Visionary Spotlight

The key to fulfilling these purposes was to enhance the volunteer staff by involving them more and doing a better job of uncovering what their God-given talents were. Also, the church launched over 100 new small groups through the *40 Days of Purpose* campaign. These changes demanded better ways to manage and communicate with the community.

To help develop the connecting processes, Calvary hired Marge Anderson from Willow Creek Community Church as its executive director of ministries. Her task was to refine and improve the processes used in running the entire front office of the church – the central hub where members and guests look for help getting “plugged in.” She was also given the task of assessing tools needed for small groups management and connecting people in various aspects of ministry within the church. More recently, Rex Minor, also from Willow Creek, has joined as interim pastor of adult discipleship to further grow this area.

Initially, when someone expressed an interest in a small group or class, the information was entered into a spreadsheet. But the spreadsheet quickly became out of date since information wasn't automatically updated or connected to the central database.

“Connections and small group aspects of the church are vital to its growth and existence.”

One church member saw the challenge and offered his expertise. Sam Gallucci is a former PeopleSoft executive, with over 22 years of customer service, sales, marketing, product development, training, and management experience in delivering complex software solutions to a diverse customer base. “We needed to ask the question, ‘How do we create a ministry development model that would look at the entire ministry development cycle and identify and connect people to make them disciples of Christ in the Christian church?’” Gallucci commented.

Gallucci created a church-adapted version of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) model and showed it to the executive staff. They were excited by its possibilities and asked him to be on the CCC Technology Task Force to grapple with the issues at hand and look for ways to greatly improve ministry efforts within the church.



Brad Johnson, Senior Pastor

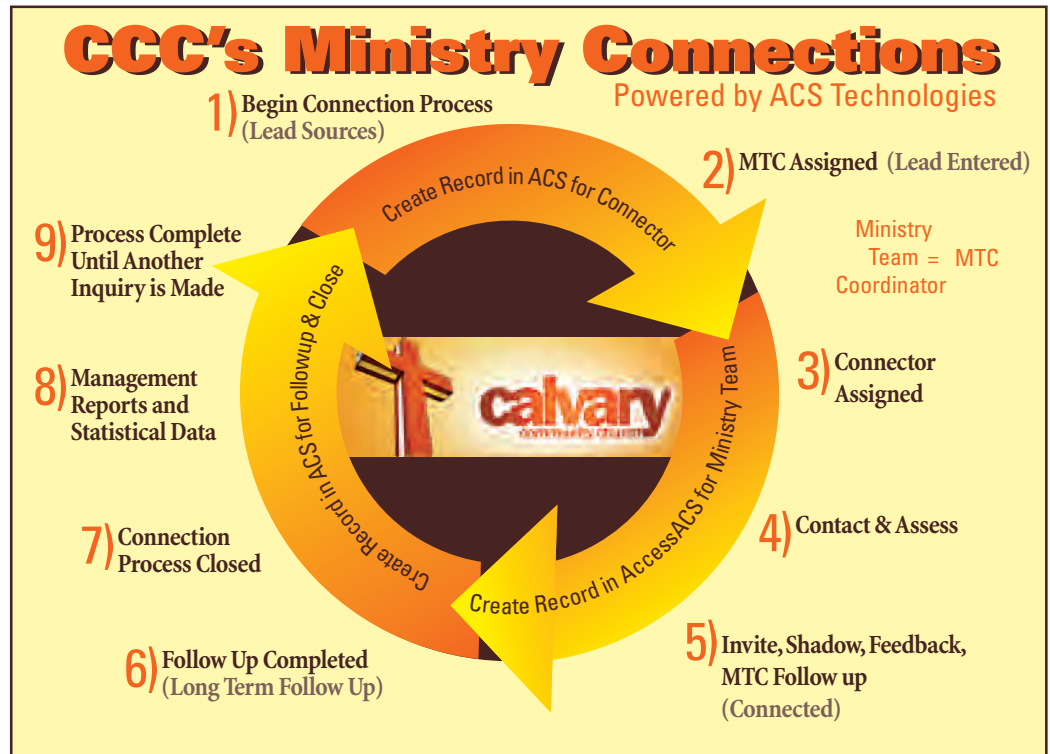
“Marge began by doing Excel® spreadsheets and then started putting pressure on us to get this process rolling — Excel just wasn’t cutting it,” says Gallucci. “She wanted the church to address the connections and small group aspects of the church that were vital to its growth and existence.”

The task force consisted of technology-industry experts who were familiar with the needs of the church. They were chartered with the researching and selecting of a software management solution that could adapt to these new processes they wished to put into place. The task force reviewed the industry, eliminating applications designed specifically to meet the needs of a particular church, and ruling out companies lacking the infrastructure to succeed over the long haul.

CCC’s Director of IT, Arthur Press, explained, “We definitely did our homework during this six-month process. We performed a company overview for each vendor, researched their history and products, and made a list of pros and cons. We narrowed our search down to three options – then we even visited other churches using the products and had some sales people give us their presentations.”

Comprehensive Review Leads to Solutions

One of the final three contenders was ACS. Interestingly, Calvary had been using ACS as their church management software for both people and financial management needs since 1995. They have 60 users and workstations, 73 staff members, and over 16,000 records in the People database. Though a satisfied ACS client, they still viewed ACS as a desktop-only solution until, in their review process, they discovered that Access ACS offered Web access to their existing database.



This diagram was created by CCC to show the connection process from beginning to end, in order to train their Ministry Team Coordinators.

During the evaluation period, Cindy Streett, product manager for Access ACS, visited CCC and demonstrated the product and what was being planned. “We knew that ACS had what CCC was looking for: the power of robust, proven desktop applications to run the complete back office with empowering and enabling Web-based tools to allow them to rapidly expand involvement of lay leaders, members, and guests. We quickly realized that CCC just didn’t know all we were doing. So, we told them!”

“One thing that I believe really convinced Calvary that ACS was the right choice was when I told them that we couldn’t do something they wanted, but that I would work on it,” continued Streett. “They appreciated my honesty and, even more so, the commitment and road map for how we would get to a solution. We were on the same page from the start and were able to

address each of their concerns one at a time,” Streett noted.

“We created a ministry development model that would look at the entire ministry development cycle and identify and connect people.”

“When we saw that ACS already had the passion for Web-based technology and that the new direction of our church would be met by a company that understood our needs and was committed to meeting them, our decision was made,” Gallucci reported.



Easter Sunday, 2006

Press added, “Understanding the specific needs of our large church is what differentiated ACS from other competitors.”

When it was all said and done, the choice was clear. Access ACS was the solution they had set out to find. Gallucci noted, “Why ACS? Access ACS is a great product, and it keeps getting better. The team wants our input and is responsive to our needs. The company’s commitment to full Web-based applications is also clear. ACS Technologies has the install base, a track record of sustained market presence, and they understand the market so that they can survive in it. Our passion and the direction of our church were met by a company that shared them.”

Equipping Calvary

The Connections staff at CCC has already begun extensively using the features of the Connections (formerly Visitation) module to enhance their communications and follow-up processes. They are creating contact assignments and using the contact management tools within the module to ensure that those contacts are made. Access ACS has played a key role in this, allowing individuals to access their assignments and report the results of their contacts online.



(Left to right) Sam Gallucci – President CRM Associates and key member of CCC’s technology task force
Marge Anderson – CCC’s Executive Director of Ministries
Arthur Press – CCC’s Director of IT

Small groups are an emerging focus area. There are currently about 113 small groups in various stages, involving about 900 people. These include a range of channels, such as adult ministries: women’s, men’s, home-based community groups, singles, workplace, and seniors. Calvary plans to make small groups a much more intentional focus area for the fall, expanding to about 750 groups.

“It will allow us to do exactly what we wanted to do – grow the church, nurture the people, and be examples of Christ.”

The church is under way with a strategic implementation process to use Access ACS to equip the community to participate in small groups using Web-based tools. The Web is essential since much of the follow-up to enroll interested individuals will be handled through volunteer laity who lead the small groups. Oversight of these volunteer leaders is handled primarily through staff leads, called MTCs (Ministry Team Coordinators). Church executives provide oversight, management, and coaching to the volunteers and are the leaders in both the strategy and the architecture of sustainable and scalable solutions.

Press stated, “We plan to unveil the newest Access ACS small groups ministry management options sometime during the summer of this year. This will be a tremendous asset, allowing group leaders the ability to add more information and allowing members to search for interesting small groups to join.” Gallucci

added, “It will allow us to do exactly what we wanted to do — grow the church, nurture the people, and be examples of Christ. This tool gives us leverage to equip the people with what they need to minister to the internal and external aspects of the church.”

Now with a Customer Relations Management philosophy in place and the tools to manage it, CCC can better connect people who attend their worship services to groups and ministries of interest and provide them with information to become involved in a variety of ways. As the church grows each day, it is also working hard to make sure that people are connecting and feeling like they are an integral part of the church. ACS Technologies continues to help by providing innovative solutions for their growing needs. □



Calvary College Group on a Mission trip to the Kumeyaay Indian reservation outside of Ensenada, Mexico.

Six Keys for Setting Up Small Groups Structure

From the ACS Technologies Implementation Team

1. Put it on paper. Write out or draw a structure tree that shows how your groups are organized. If this isn't possible, consider reorganizing your groups.

2. Keep it simple. The structure should be organized enough to function, but simple enough for people to understand. It should make sense, even to people who are not involved.

3. Plan for growth. Consider where your small groups ministry will likely be in two years. Make sure that the structure you put in place now will accommodate the needs you will have.

4. Structure for success. Make sure that the structure you put in place works in conjunction with the expectations you have for your groups and leaders. For example, if you want coaches to mentor and train leaders, make sure that the ratio of leaders to coaches is appropriate (usually no more than 7:1).

5. Define the roles. In writing, clearly communicate the guidelines, expectations, and responsibilities of the people involved in the small groups ministry. Coaches, leaders, assistants, and participants should all know what role they are filling.

6. Allow for change. Ministry needs change. Congregations change. Your small groups ministry will need to change to maintain its effectiveness. New groups will need to be formed. Existing groups will need to split, adapt, or fade away. There should be processes in place for handling these changes.

Online Resources

For solutions used by CCC, visit:

- www.accessacs.com for Web-based member management
- www.acstechnologies.com/products/people_suite for attendance tracking ideas
- www.acstechnologies.com/products/growth_products for help managing multiple calendars



Advice to clients from Hal Campbell

We are blessed to have thousands of clients who've been using ACS solutions for years. We value these long-standing relationships, but we're discovering that in many cases, our clients don't know about the many new products and solutions we have. They haven't really taken a good look at what we offer since they made their first purchase decision – and that might have been a decade ago as in the case with Calvary Community Church. So, here's my advice.

If you're considering a change, think ACS Technologies first, visit our Web site, review the products, and check out the success stories. If you don't see what you're looking for – and even if you do – take the time to call us. You can call your sales consultant, or call me if you need to. The odds are that we have what you need, or we are far along in the development process for it. If we don't have it now, maybe we should. We want your input.

More tips:

- 1) Inquire about implementation assistance to match where you want to go with the tools needed to get you there. Email us at implementation@acstechnologies.com.
- 2) Visit us in person. We regularly have visitors in our Florence headquarters. We can get to know each other better, and that always leads to good things.
- 3) Share your dreams with us. Start by emailing your sales consultant, a product manager, or me to let us know your hopes and plans for your church.

We want to empower your vision for your church. Help us by letting us know what your vision is...and we will stand by you all the way there!