

John Cionca

Inviting Volunteers to Minister

Stories and Strategies from Seven Effective Churches



Cover and inside design, Liz Howe
Editor, Lynn Perrigo
Acquisitions editor, Ruth Frederick

© 1999 by John Cionca
All rights reserved

Published by The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio
A division of Standex International Corporation
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 0-7847-0947-5

Preface

++++++

For the past fifteen years, I have been surveying congregations as to their most challenging Christian education problems. Without even a close runner-up, the greatest need is always the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Finding enough volunteers to run an effective educational ministry is a challenge to both small and large congregations; to church plants and centenarians; to urban, suburban, and rural parishes; and to congregations of evangelical, mainline, and charismatic affiliation. Obviously, if there are some staffing secrets out there, most of us are eager to discover them.

Before tackling this resource, I also asked hundreds of pastors to tell me about what is working well in their educational programs. These ideas led to a few dozen interviews, which eventually led to the seven chapters you have before you. What you have in *Inviting Volunteers to Minister* is an insider's look at how seven effective churches go about staffing their educational programs. I have chosen to highlight the areas where each church has made a special, though perhaps not unique, contribution.

As you read these stories, you will notice more similarities than differences. What I have learned is that churches that are effective in directing volunteer service are usually doing the same things. They are passionate about their call to impact lives, develop an atmosphere conducive to service, are people-oriented, cultivate prospects, interview and check backgrounds, train their people, and supply plenty of encouragement and appreciation. The beauty of diversity is that each of these churches swaps its own personality and emphases around these leadership practices. Thus, we can both enjoy and learn from the models of ministry shared by these colleagues.