

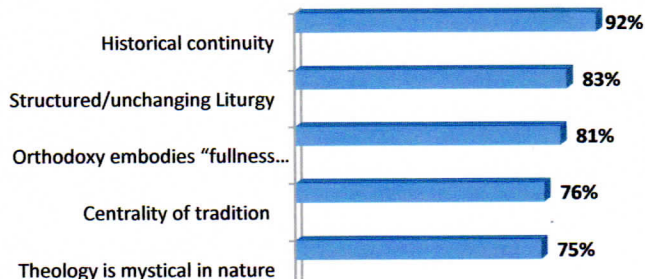
# Evangelization & Growth Insights

## Orthodox Convert Profile

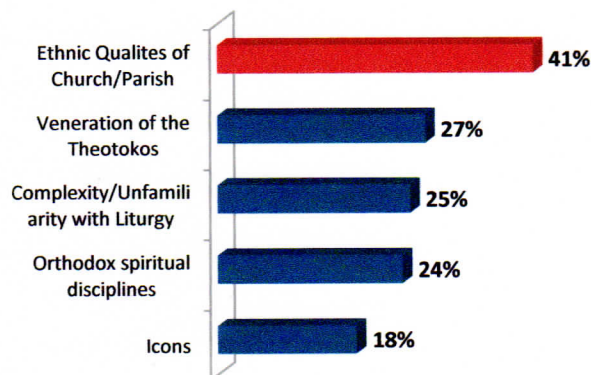
- 60% Male
- Well educated: 88% College; 34% advanced degree
- Almost entirely Caucasian
- Faith background: 29% "multiple"; 20% Roman Catholic; 9% Episcopal; 34% Other Protestant; 8% Non Christian
- Most found us – not invited.

## To What are Converts Attracted?

### Attractive Attributes of Orthodox Christianity as Cited by 194 Orthodox Converts ~ 2008



## Difficulties and Differences Experienced by Orthodox Converts in America



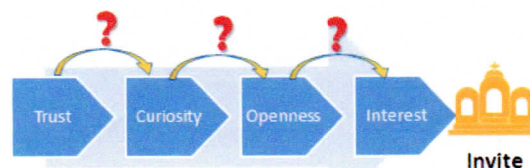
## What Do People Find Here?

1. **Doctrinal integrity** and continuity with the original apostolic "deposit" that does not shift with the times or with prevailing fads.
2. An emphasis on the experience and **atmosphere of worship** in which we acknowledge the holiness and majesty of God.
3. An over-all **Christian "world view"** that is meant to be lived out as a "way of life."

***"Go out into the highways and lanes, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled."***

*Luke 14:23*

## Inviting People to Church



**Who:** **FRAN** (Friends, Relatives, Associates, Neighbors)

**Key Tool:** Good Questions (honest, non rhetorical, not an interview) & Personal Narrative

**Key Skill:** Listening

**Motivation:** Gratitude; responsibility; *concern*

*When inviting becomes a part of parish life it becomes easier to invite*

## Top Words

### Words Used By Orthodox Converts to Describe Orthodox Christianity

- |             |            |              |
|-------------|------------|--------------|
| • Authentic | • Timeless | • Beauty     |
| • Sensory   | • Rooted   | • Joyful     |
| • Mystical  | • Settled  | • Continuity |
| • Apostolic | • Truth    | • Scriptural |

## Practical Tips for Conversations

Don't do things for show –for sole purpose of attracting attention. *Be authentic*

Help people understand who you are? (Identity). Don't purposely hide (or show) your faith.

For others to be open –you must be open. Allow people to get a peek into your life.

*Conversation starters that may invite inquiry:*

- Loss of loved one /serious problem -- "what is their name... I'll pray for them."
- Calendar differences -- Take off Holy Friday
- Sign of cross at meal
- Cross in your office
- Where were you today? What did you do yesterday?
  - "Went to confession" (You'd say if you went to the dentist.)

Avoid premature persuasion or even premature interest building.

*If no inquiry... should we assume all is well?*

## Personal Narrative

- What does God mean to me?
- Why do I have faith/why do I believe?
- Why am I an Orthodox Christian?
- Why do I attend this parish?

## Examples

*"I am Orthodox Christian because I believe the Orthodox Church reveals an authentic, apostolic and perfectly modern understanding of God. Coming to church helps me find the right track. And it helps me to Glorify Him."*

+++++

*"As a teen, I struggle with many significant decisions every day. Being an Orthodox Christian makes my struggle easier, guiding me through a maze of choices. My faith makes my struggle less lonely, giving me strength when I feel lost. But, most importantly, Orthodoxy makes my struggle meaningful, teaching me that life is a miraculous gift that I am only beginning to understand."*

## A Parish Evangelism Cycle

### **Identify**

Locate individual receptive persons and pockets of persons who represent areas of greatest potency for your parish's evangelization initiative.

### **Inform**

Build awareness, trust, curiosity and openness.

### **Invite**

Invite those with curiosity and receptivity to come and see. Welcome and receive them with warmth.

### **Nurture**

Follow up carefully and honestly to grow interest in and excitement for the faith. Help them to explore what the Church offers and to identify if they truly seek it. Encourage participation as appropriate in services and events.

### **Instruct**

Guide potential new members to catechetical programs, scripture studies or other paths of entry through parish groups.

### **Incorporate**

Involve or include in a role, task or group after uniting them with the church.

### **Inspire**

Encourage them to begin the cycle anew by evangelizing the active – to renew their commitment to Christ; the inactive – to heat up those only minimally involved; and the unchurched-to share the light of Christ with all.

