Summary of Common Evangelism Challenges for Orthodox Churches

- **Cultural Resistance to Change**
  Many communities are entrenched in longstanding cultural traditions and exhibit an insular mindset, making integration difficult for newcomers. There is often reluctance to adapt or make space for other cultures or expressions.
- **Difficult Newcomer Experience**
  Orthodox services can feel confusing, exotic, or isolating to visitors. Without clear guidance or intentional follow-up, newcomers often feel like outsiders or get lost in the crowd.
- **Practical Limitations**
  Physical location, traffic, building overcrowding, and lack of funding all hinder a parish's ability to effectively welcome and retain newcomers.
- **Poor Communication and Outreach**
  Churches often underutilize tools like social media and lack targeted strategies for reaching college students, marginalized groups, or non-Orthodox backgrounds.
- **Demographic Gaps**
  Some parishes struggle to attract certain groups, such as young women, raising broader concerns about inclusion, relevancy, and long-term sustainability.

Cultural and Internal Mindset Barriers

- Pre-existing culture and fear of change
- Resistance to change
- Entrenched cultural habits
- Insular or closed-off mindset
- Subversive insular thinking
- Convert trauma (past experiences shaping attitudes toward change)
- Do we help people fit in or expect them to conform?
- Do we promote multi-ethnic or multi-cultural communities?

Experiential and Liturgical Challenges

- Services feel exotic or unfamiliar
- Hard to understand the flow of the liturgy
- Services are in English (can be a barrier or benefit depending on audience)
- Cultural disconnects (e.g., Korean Orthodox Church example)
- Sense of being outsiders

- Feeling alone in a crowd or socially isolated
- Assumptions made about newcomers
- Unclear follow-up after welcoming
- Lack of systems to help newcomers get plugged in

Practical and Logistical Barriers

- Long distances to parishes
- Traffic and accessibility issues
- Overcrowded spaces that leave no room for newcomers
- Lack of finances to support evangelism
- Lack of physical welcoming signs or signage that feels uninviting
- Newcomers arriving early but not being greeted

Outreach and Communication Challenges

- Lack of social media presence
- Difficulty reaching other ethnic groups
- Uncertainty about how to reach groups like the homeless, trans people, or college students
- Communities where people are not actively seeking faith

Demographic Concerns

- Noticeable absence of young women