



A.D.P. Trinity Model To Make American Greek Orthodox Church Disciples

Since 33 A.D., Jesus Christ trusted us to be stewards of His Holy Orthodox Christian Church. There are currently approximately 230 Million Orthodox adherents globally. The American Greek Orthodox Church (AGOC) has over 500,000 parishioners distributed among approximately 550 parishes divided into nine regional Metropolises and one national **Archdiocese** (“**A**”). The AGOC will begin a reorganization process during the next three years, and as one of the experienced national Archdiocesan Council leaders, I humbly offer the following “**A.D.P. Trinity Model**.”

The **A** has no articulated Why, Mission or Vision Statements, or Core Values. Thus, during an initial three-year “**Strategic Development Period**,” the **A** and new regional **Dioceses** (“**D**”) (proposed below) should reach a consensus on a Strategic Plan. Since my Stewardship Calling ministry developed Strategic Plans that currently cover over 26% of American Orthodox Christians, this experience allows me to suggest the following starting points:

Proposed New WHY Statement (the fundamental purpose an organization exists)

Follow Christ to Light the Way to God.

Proposed MISSION Statement (what an organization does.) (Einstein was wrong $E^2=MDC$ not $E=MC^2$)

Make Disciples of Christ through Education and Engagement.

Proposed CORE VALUES (fundamental organizational beliefs that drive decisions)

Christ-centered loving, learning, and leading.

Proposed VISION Statement (where the organization will be at a set time in the future)

Within three years, the AGOC will research, design, test, and implement best practices solutions that materially and measurably improve Education and Engagement as outlined in specific E² Strategic S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Action Plans.

Current State And Need For Change

In over 100 years since its American migration, Orthodoxy has declined from 0.5% of the U.S. population to approximately 0.3% in 2022. In addition, 47% of cradle Orthodox adults have left the church, 64% of youth step away when they leave their family homes, and only 15% of faithful regularly attend church, where they admit that 70%-80% of the time their minds wander during the Divine Liturgy. American Orthodoxy is struggling to grow.

Empirical research shows that the two critical root causes of most such church challenges are insufficient religious **Education** (“**E1**”) and inadequate liturgical, sacramental, ministry, and financial **Engagement** (“**E2**”). While Orthodox theology has remained essentially unchanged for almost 2,000 years, the operational model of teaching this foundational truth and how the faithful engage with it is failing in the United States. The early American Greek Orthodox church consisted of largely uneducated Greek immigrants and has evolved into highly educated and “successful” second and third-generation descendants. Thus, it is imperative to reverse the negative growth trends listed above to ensure Orthodoxy in America can survive and thrive.

Future State

The AGOC must reverse all negative trends and, within 25 years, can more than triple in size with at least a 20% increase in **Parishes** (“**P**”), all providing transformational **E1** and **E2** solutions. These metrics can be substantially exceeded if the separate Stewardship Calling proposed 12-Jurisdiction Orthodox Unity Plan succeeds.

Proposed New American Greek Orthodox Church A.D.P. Trinity Model

Under the new “**A.D.P. Trinity Model**,” a reorganized national **Archdiocese** (“**A**”) will identify best practices to address the empirically identified proven solutions of the root causes of the negative trends: deeper faith **Education** (“**E1**”) and greater parishioner **Engagement** (**E2**). To better share these solutions, the U.S. would be divided into 15 (current projection) AGOC **Dioceses** (“**D**”) regionally distributed based on the **P**s in their geography. The **D**s would be primarily responsible for becoming training and support organizations to help the local **P**s implement the **A**-developed best practices **E1** and **E2** solutions for the benefit of the “**PIPs**” (Parishioners In Pews), “**APIPs**” (Absent Parishioners In Pews), and “**FPIPs**” (Future Parishioners In Pews).



While the church is not a business, this **A.D.P Trinity Model** mirrors the highly successful “invent once, share often” franchise model. National franchisors (i.e., **A**) research and develop the best service/products/solutions they pass on to their regional sub-franchisors (i.e., **D**) to be delivered and refined with the local franchises (i.e., **P**). Implementation experiences, successes/failures, innovations, unique alternatives, and new experiential best practices are shared by **P**s through **D**s to the national **A** so they may be further refined and redistributed back to **D**s for sharing with all **P**s.

A 3-Phase Roadmap for the Next Quarter Century of Greek Orthodoxy In America

Phase 1 (years 1-3): Most **P**s are significantly under-resourced to research, develop, and implement **E1** and **E2** best practices. Moreover, there is no organizational vehicle or process to share at scale what **E1** and **E2** solutions work or are ineffective. The **E1** solutions will include detailed, comprehensive year-round in-person and online adult and youth religious, Biblical, and spiritual Orthodox education, including Catechumens (Orthodox converts) and seekers. **E2** solutions will include comprehensive welcoming, small group “one-anothering,” in-reach, outreach, evangelism, tithing, and financial stewardship. Experience suggests the **A** will need the three-year Strategic Development Period to (a) validate the proposed Why/Mission/Vision Statements and Core Values and complete researching and designing the most effective **E1** and **E2** solutions (including all curriculum and implementation procedures manuals), (b) recruit the **E1** and **E2** ministry leaders, (c) divide the country into the geographic 15 **D**s, and (d) recruit and train the necessary **D** trainers and **E1** and **E2** implementation specialists.

Phase 2 (years 3-4): The **D**s newly recruited regional **E1** and **E2** trainers and implementation specialists will deliver the new best practices solutions to all **P**s in their geographic region. This training is repeated annually.

Phase 3 (years 4-25): Each **P** will complete a strategic planning process (or update their previous plans) to accept and embrace the **A** Why, Mission, and Vision Statements, and Core Values or identify their own versions. In addition, each **P** will implement their **P**-specific E² S.M.A.R.T. GOALS (updated each 3-5 years) using a version of this template:

STRATEGIC E² S.M.A.R.T. GOALS (specific strategic goals to achieve the Vision - S.M.A.R.T. Goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant/Realistically written, and Time-bound with interim and ultimate deadlines to create accountability)

Implement best practices to improve:

**Education by (metrics = X) through (process = Y) within (deadline = Z), and
Engagement by (metrics = X) through (process = Y) within (deadline = Z).**

All Strategic S.M.A.R.T. Goal Action Plans will include 1. definitions/metrics of what constitutes **E1** and **E2** success (insert in **X** above), 2. benchmarking of their current status in relation to researched **E1** and **E2** best practices, 3. comprehensive implementation plans to achieve best practices (insert in **Y** above), 4. deadlines for each action (insert in **Z** above), and 5. qualitative/quantitative measurement of achievement of best practices.

Within the 25-year **A.D.P. Trinity Model** implementation period, the **A**, **D**, and **P** Strategic Plans and **E1** and **E2** success metrics (**X**) and processes (**Y**) will be continuously re-evaluated and updated (every 3-5 years) to achieve the future goal of a minimum tripling the size of the AGOC with at least a 20% increase in the number of **P**s.

Pitfalls and Eternal Consequences of Failure

Decades of lethargy, poor leadership, lack of creative and effective solutions, fear of the unknown, unwillingness to research workable alternatives, under-resourced groups, and change resistance remain the headwinds for the **A.D.P. Trinity Model**. These challenges are prevalent in the Orthodox Christian faith tradition that: (a) immigrated to the U.S. from Orthodox-dominant countries with State-supported religion, (b) remains virtually unchanged for almost 2,000 years, and (c) is managed in a conciliar fashion by a synod of all Bishops who make major decisions by consensus. If it is God’s will, the **A.D.P. Trinity Model** can succeed and be fully funded and implemented through **Orthodox Ministry Services** Venture Philanthropy donors, reallocating existing **Leadership 100 Endowment** awards and **parish tithes/offerings**.

Presiding over the further decline of Orthodoxy into American oblivion has the most severe of eternal consequences. The Orthodox Divine Liturgy and Holy Scripture make clear that we will each individually seek “**a good account before the awesome judgement seat of Christ**” based on what we did as stewards of God’s gifts. Christ entrusted His church to us. Who among us is prepared to stand before the Lord to confess we were responsible for losing disciples in our own nation rather than “**making disciples of all nations?**”