

6. Investigative Method

Method

In order to investigate the truth of my thesis – Parish Communion inhibits growing the Church – I selected two pairs of parishes in different parts of the City of Toronto as the vehicles for my study. Each of the pairs is comprised of one parish that includes Morning Prayer and/or Evening Prayer as a principal service at least once during each month, and one neighbouring parish that offers only the Eucharist on Sundays. My rationale is that the paired parishes will be experiencing substantially the same socio-economic factors, and a similar ethnicity within its parish catchment area. They have, therefore similar opportunity. Allowing for differences attributable to the personal charism of the Incumbent, it should be possible to draw some conclusions as to whether or not the Eucharist-only worship format is proving to be beneficial or detrimental to parish sustainability and growth. None of the parishes selected are destination parishes, or have a storied history that would artificially support its ministry from outside the parish boundaries.

I visited each of the Morning Prayer parishes in question, to determine whether or not the Rector's charism was a preponderant factor in whatever success the parish was experiencing. I also visited services of Morning and or Evening Prayer at other parishes to some perspective on what I found in the parishes under study, to attempt to eliminate any unwarranted conclusions.

I gathered data from the Diocesan archives for the preceding ten year period to illuminate the information I discovered during my site visit and interview with the incumbent, and other members of the parish.

Very simply, I propose to compare the statistically information, augmented by my own observation and that of others, to determine whether or not there has been an increase or decrease in parish

membership that can be attributed to the worship format – specifically, Eucharist-only, versus alternating the Eucharist with Morning or Evening Prayer.

Parishes Studied

In the electoral district of Beaches East York – City Wards 31 and 32, I studied the Parishes of The Resurrection (The Rez), on Woodbine Avenue, and St. Saviours on Kimberly Street.

In the electoral district of Etobicoke Centre – City Wards 3 and 4 – I studied the Parishes of Christ the King on Rathburn Road, and St. Wifrid's on Kipling Avenue.

For some perspective, I also visited St. Timothy Agincourt, St. Margaret's North Toronto, the Church of the Redeemer; and the Church of the Good Shepherd (Weston), all of which have services of Morning or Evening prayer. I am also, of course, familiar with the Evensong celebration at my home parish, St. Thomas's Huron Street.