

## SETTING UP CLUSTER AREAS

I must apologize for my tardiness in getting to this project. I have had some issues that I had to deal with before I could write up this report and think about the Cluster Area development. I am also going to be away from May 12<sup>th</sup> through to June 29<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, I want to get this report out to you (Pastors and Clerks of churches without pastors) now so you can think about it over the summer months.

The idea of setting up Cluster Areas through out Annapolis\Digby Association of Baptist Churches was conceived a few years ago as we were remodeling the Constitution. It was noticed that a number of smaller churches miss out on fellowship, training and equipping the laity that larger churches are able to do because of their size and financial ability. It was the hope that small churches within an area could come together every so often for fellowship, and to plan for training in a certain area of church ministry or share in ministry together. I personally was hoping that if we could get these Cluster Areas set up and active, it would bring our Baptist family closer together through fellowship. Also, that the general public can see us as a denomination enjoying our faith and enjoying each other.

During the past year a questionnaire was sent to all churches and pastors. We learned from that questionnaire that there was an interest by some churches to be a part of a Cluster Area. From the report of the questionnaire we also found out that some churches do come together for fellowship, share in some form of ministry together.

Below are the proposed Areas and the churches we placed in each area. A church is free to be a part of another Cluster area, or not be part of the cluster at all if they so wish. We also realized that there were churches in the Association who meet regularly for fellowship and working together on ministries and projects. Where we had knowledge of such, we tried to keep these churches together.

### **CLUSTER AREAS:**

**DIGBY AREA** --- Acaciaville, Digby, Culloden, Smiths Cove, Hill Grove, Bear River, Deep Brook / Clementsport, Clementsvale, Bear River East

**WEYMOUTH AREA** ---- North Range, St. Mary's Bay, Plympton, Ashmore, New Tusket Weymouth Falls (Mount Beulah)

**DIGBY NECK & ISLANDS** ---- Rossway and Centerville, Little River, Sandy Cove and East Ferry, Freeport, Tiverton, Westport ( Have worked together on special services\fellowship)

**ANNAPOLIS WEST AREA** --- Annapolis, Granville Ferry, Granville Centre, Granville Beach, Port Wade, Port Royal, Victoria Beach, adding (Lakebrook, Hillsburn and Parkers Cove

**BRIDGETOWN AREA** --- Bridgetown, West Dalhousie, Centrelea, Inglewood, Paradise, Lawrencetown, Inglisville, (Port Lorne and Hampton), Clarence

**MIDDLETON AREA** ---- Middleton, Port George, Victoria Vale, Margarettsville, Mount Hanley, Nictaux, Torbrook, Wilmot, Melvern Square,

With the above geographical areas as suggestions, this will encourage the churches in these areas to begin fellowship where there has not been in the past; or maybe rekindle relationships that have drifted apart. These cluster areas would not prevent current fellowships, worship and mutual training that are currently shared between churches, but only encourages new and growing relationships within the different cluster areas.

The question was asked, why would I want a church to join a cluster area where the church is doing well and is able to function on its own without outside help?

Churches working together in the clusters areas can improve the health of our denomination and be a strong Christian witness to the people of Annapolis and Digby Counties. As we work together we can strengthen our churches, strengthen individual members in their faith through workshops and special training and build up a relationship amongst our churches that enables us to feel part of a Christian family. Churches coming together in a cluster area, enables small churches to have fellowship with sister churches, and receive training for ministry in their local church, which they would not be able to obtain by themselves. Help with funding for special workshops and training could come from the Association. We can do so much more to advance the witness of Jesus Christ in a cluster area by partnering together than we can do alone.

The working group felt that there has to be deliberate action on setting the clusters up where possible or it will not happen. However, if in an area a church or a number of churches are not interested in coming into a cluster area, there is not much one can do. The success of the cluster areas rests in the churches that are willing to participate and develop fellowship and promote ministry together. As your Moderator I volunteered to become a Cluster Coordinator setting up meetings (with the help of a pastor ) within each of the areas listed above and explain the Cluster Area idea and encourage implantation.

Early in the fall 2010, I would like to meet with the churches in the proposed Cluster Areas to see how churches feel about being a part of a cluster. I will be contacting pastors in September to see if they would be willing to host a meeting. At this meeting it will be possible to make plans for a time of fellowship and begin to think of ministries and events the Cluster Area may be willing to host and be of value to the churches in the area.

Please be in prayer about forming Cluster Groups and plan to attend when a meeting is called

In His Service,

Fred Bigelow