

# Church in Town and Country Conference Topic

Rev. R. E. Peritt of Campbellville has written a report of the National Episcopal Conference in Town and Country work, which he attended in Salina, Kansas, from October 25 to 29 as a delegate from the Diocese of Niagara. His account follows in its entirety.

During the last week of October, it was my privilege and great honor to attend the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, which was held in the city of Salina, Kansas, U.S.A. At the same time the Conference of the Episcopal church committee on Town and Country Church met with headquarters in the Lamer Hotel. This group had invited 12 official delegates from Canada to their meetings as well as the Convocation which included all the Protestant churches of the U.S.

The conference began on Monday evening, October 25, in the Coronado Room of the Lamer Hotel, with the Rev. Clifford Samuelson as the chairman, who in a most genial and eloquent way gave directions as to how the delegates could get the most out of the Convocation and at the same time carry on their own Conference.

The Conference and Convocation was admirably graced by the presence of the Right Reverend G. Warde, Bishop of Lewes in Sussex, and Suffragan Bishop of Chester, England. Bishop Warde is chairman of the Committee on Town and Country Church in England and in his wonderful way made a great contribution to the meetings. He was the Celebrant at the Service of Holy Communion on Wednesday, October 27, at 7.30 a.m. and in the evening of the same day was one of the guest speakers at the Rural Workers' Fellowship banquet, which was held in the Parish Hall of Christ Cathedral.

Bishop Warde also spoke at various points in the Conference, which informed those present of the conditions in the Rural Church in England and their problems in contrast to the state of the Rural Churches in the U.S. and Canada. He was, as he put it, completely overwhelmed by the magnitude of the country, the pace of life here, the Hurricane Hazel, and the Conference, which he later termed, "a

tornado." Among other surprises, Bishop Warde had a most pleasant experience in meeting for the first time in his life, a first cousin who lives in Kansas City. She had the pleasure of being with him for some of the social gatherings of the Conference.

Another distinguished visitor was the Right Reverend Daniel Mar Philoxenos, a Bishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church of South India. In his native robes Bishop Philoxenos was a colorful and interesting figure, as well as a source of much consternation to the school children of Salina. In his very amiable way, he made a marvellous contribution to the meetings, speaking of the work and life of the Church in South India. He was the other guest speaker at the banquet mentioned above.

A valuable summary was given by him at the close of the Seminar session on "The farm, the family and the church," one of the 17 Seminars of the Convocation. You corresponded was also a member of that Seminar, and had a most exhilarating experience in hearing the comments of several speakers who told of their experiences in a way that was both entertaining and enlightening.

One interesting anecdote was contributed by a minister of the Methodist Church from Kansas. He told of one occasion when he was called by a boy of his congregation to go to his farm and see what he could do to help him, as his prize-winning calf was very sick; whereupon he went. The distraught boy asked his minister to pray for his calf but the minister said, "Why don't you try it, seeing that it is your calf?" The boy did so and this was his prayer, "Lord, please don't take my calf, take my brother's, because he has lots of them and I only have two!"

It was concluded in this Seminar that pastors need not try to be specialists in other than their own vocation, but to be acquainted with the ways and means of how they can best coach those who have a specific problem in finding the right channel of aid. Another point, which was soundly emphasized, was the importance of the whole of the farm family attending their worship services together.

give his thoughts on the subject and he said that religion must go into every department of life, just as the leaven must be thoroughly mixed in the meal. He continued to say that the pastor must try to give leadership in anything if he possibly can.

A farm mother from Missouri stated that if more people would put Christ first in their life, many of the problems and frustrations would be non-existent. Another body stressed the therapeutic of healing value of always working in and with nature.

One of the vital subjects discussed in this Seminar was that of finding ways and means of helping young people to get a start on a farm, if they wish to do so. One powerful suggestion was to encourage those who have excess funds to make them available to young couples who were worthy, instead of investing money in something which did nobody any direct good, thereby, having the added benefit of seeing they were helping those in need, as well as receiving ample return from their investment.

It was stressed that every family should be reminded of the fact that when they were making their wills, it is very important that they remember the obligation to their church, as the stewards of God.

One of the most outstanding contributions to the whole Convocation was made by the Rev. John Philbrick, who is an Associate Staff member in charge of the Demonstration Rural Homestead at the Roanridge Rural training centre at Parkville, Missouri. In his address to the Convocation in the Salina Memorial Hall on Tuesday, October 26, at 7.30, he spoke on the subject, "The Minister's Backyard." He told of how he and his wife were demonstrating on their homestead at the Roanridge Training Centre, that a man given a little seed, some good soil and a few animals could become almost self-supporting.

The Rev. John Philbrick and his wife Helen who is also the secretary-treasurer of the Rural Workers' Fellowship, raise their own vegetables, make their own soap, keep bees to produce their honey, and keep a few sheep, from which they spin wool to weave cloth for clothing. He declared in the course of his address that one of the chief misconceptions of this age was that all forces could be measured and any force that cannot be measured is supposed by some scientists not to exist at all.

Rev. John went on to explain some practical garden dynamics, such as protecting gardens against the destruction of animal life, e.g. rabbits do not like onions, and by interspersing a garden with a row of that vegetable, it would naturally ward them off. Likewise by planting some sage amongst the cabbage, it would help to protect the latter from butterflies. To conquer the potato beetle, he pointed out that an immense aid was to plant a row of beans between the rows of potatoes.

He then explained that there was always an interpretation of some great truth behind all living things in God's Creation and that the way of destruction is never the right way. In conclusion, he drew attention to the two main approaches to life and illustrated that statement by giving examples of two prayers: (a) "Lord, this is what I am going to do, etc." (b) "Lord what will Thou have me do?"

The same evening Bishop W. C. Martin of Dallas, Texas (of the Methodist church) gave an address on the subject, "We shall build it a church." In opening his address, he claimed that there was something about a Town and Country Church Conference that was totally unpredictable. It reminded him of a story about a young pig, so that she would have something to feed the scraps from the table to her summer residence. At the end of the house in buy the pig and offered the woman eight dollars for it. She said that she only wanted five dollars for it, because she had had the use of it all summer!

Bishop Martin maintained that it was the business of the church to establish a solid rock of faith in order to undergird the national life. He observed that farmers were not belligerent or revolutionary at heart, but were generally peace loving. He concluded with the declaration that the world lives on the four "B's" - i.e., brains, bread, babies and business, and added to these must be brotherhood.

The Rev. Norman Foote, who is the Director of the Roanridge Training Centre, also spoke at the Convocation and gave an interpretation of some great truth behind all living things.

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