

# The R. Alex Sim Rural Ministry Symposium 2010

October 25 to 27, 2010,  
Crieff Hills Community, Puslinch, Ontario (near Kitchener)  
For more details go to: [www.ruralsymposium.ca](http://www.ruralsymposium.ca)

## Background

The R. Alex Sim Rural Ministry Symposium is held biennially, under the auspices of Queen's Theological College, Kingston, to nurture and empower rural churches. It is coordinated by an ecumenical Planning Committee, which includes members from Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and United Churches. The symposium being held October 25 to 27, 2010, at Crieff Hills Community, Puslinch Ontario, will be the eighth such event.

The four primary goals of the symposium are to:

- 1) Assist clergy and lay leaders of rural churches in broadening their understanding of rural communities and churches so that they might be better equipped to lead rural congregations during these times of change.
- 2) Raise awareness and understanding among theological students and faculty about the changing nature of rural communities and churches and of the issues that they face.
- 3) Foster mutual understanding among rural clergy, rural lay people, theological students and faculty by providing them the opportunity to interact in an ecumenical forum.
- 4) Affirm the gifts, strengths and joys of the rural church and rural people.

## Program Description

The 2010 Symposium is entitled "**Therefore Chose Life**" and will focus on issues related to the sustainability of rural communities and the role that rural churches can play in strengthening and/or preserving their communities through fostering various aspects of community health such as economic, services (public, social, medical) environmental, and families.

The symposium will include a variety of experiences including theme presentations, small group discussions, plenary forums, workshops, worship, entertainment, and free time for one-on-one exchanges. In a book display, current resource material related to rural issues and rural ministries will be available for browsing and purchase.

Two theme presenters will be featured:

Dr. Gil Waldkoenig, Director, Town and Country Church Institute, Gettysburg P.A., will examine how the local church's witness in environmental concerns can be an important resource for community building, sustainable living, and proclamation of the Gospel in fresh and clear tones.

Dr. Rene Van Acker, Associate Dean External Relations, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph, will examine the effects of agricultural production systems on rural communities and how churches can help create/sustain healthy communities.

Those in attendance will be able to develop these themes further through sharing of observations, experiences and expertise, in the small group discussions and plenary forums.

An extensive selection of workshops is being offered on a wide range of topics related to rural life and rural ministry. Leadership of these workshops will be provided by clergy, lay people and faculty with particular expertise in the selected topics.