

HALTON'S PEOPLE

Few pros, lots of cons in entering the ministry

By **MAGGIE HANNAH**
Herald staff writer

"Theology is the study of a million questions with a thousand answers," says Knox Presbyterian Church minister, Rev. Peter Barrow. "The frustrating part is that things don't come with easy answers. There are lots of pointers, but no easy answers."

Rev. Barrow sees the ministry as a vocation. Certainly no one would enter it to get rich or famous, he says. Nor is it something that would appeal to anyone with a power complex.

"I can think of a million reasons why one shouldn't go into it," he says, "and very few actual reasons why one should, so it does become a call. I get fantastic spiritual compensation, but it's not what most people would accept as compensation."

Rev. Barrow admits the ministry was not his original choice of a career. However, he found his plans changing as he matured.

"My decision to go into the ministry was a mystery to me," he chuckles. "At 17, I saw myself doing a degree in law followed by a course in business administration. Then I could go into industry and work my way up to be a company secretary. It seemed a good way to make a fair amount of money. But as Burns said, 'the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft aglee'. I had always had a church background and I regarded myself as an average sort of Christian, but nothing exceptional. Suddenly I found myself leaning more and more to the church."

AIR FORCE

He was called into the Royal Air Force at 17 and during the next three years, had a "fantastic time" working out of London while he was attached to the air ministry there. He also sorted out his intentions, and was ready to enter university for his fine arts and divinity degree when he finished his service.

Rev. Barrow took a post graduate degree from the University of Glasgow, which was no bigger than Georgetown District High School when he was there as a student. He met his wife Carol while there.

Rev. Barrow says he was raised "half-Methodist and half-Anglican".

"I think that's reason enough to be a Presbyterian minister," he grins. "My father was a lay preacher in the Methodist church and my godparents were strong Anglicans. They shared me as I grew up so that Sunday mornings I went to the Methodist church with my father and in the evenings I went to the Anglican church with my godparents. The village school happened to be an Anglican school in those days too, so I learned all the creeds and things while I was there."

Rev. Barrow was ordained in January, 1961, and was initially associate minister to a Glasgow church with a congregation of 2,500. He spent 11 years at his second church, where his congregation was about 1,600.

He believes his Georgetown and Limehouse congregation of 420, plus 50 to 60 adherents,

keep him busier than his big congregation in Scotland.

"In the big churches, the congregation had to take a lot of the organization and administration on their own shoulders," he says. "The minister is pretty well confined to marriages, funerals, visiting in hospitals and quietly going round the older people. Here, he is expected to be involved with everything because the congregation is smaller."

ROLE DIFFERENT

Although the preaching itself may be little different in Scotland, in Canada his role in the community is decidedly different. As a minister for the national church of Scotland, Rev. Barrow was responsible to the whole community for all the various services a minister is called upon to perform. The Roman Catholics went to the priest but almost everyone else either belonged to the state church or used its services when a church was necessary, he says.

He wouldn't dream of viewing all Georgetown's residents as his responsibility, as he had in Scotland.

"I'm actually kind of glad Canada doesn't have a national church," he says. "Sometimes a national church gives an authority a minister shouldn't have. In Canada, a minister is judged by his results, and any credence he is given by his community is based on what he has done in that community."

What Peter Barrow does in his community has put him in touch with many of its residents. He is chaplain for the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 120, the Georgetown Air Cadets and the Volunteer Firefighters, all of which are honorary positions. He is on the board of the Halton Hills Legal Clinic, a member of the mental health advisory committee, a governor at Oaklands Regional Centre for retarded children and president of the Georgetown Rotary Club. He was also Georgetown's citizen of the year in 1975.

LUCKY IN LIFE

Rev. Barrow says he has been lucky in life. Nothing he has ever done has been a total disaster, either in his ministry or in his personal life. He has a better understanding of dealing with grief since the death of his own father, he says, but that doesn't mean he feels inadequate in helping his parishioners with problems he hasn't personally experienced.

Despite all the community involvement, he says he isn't basically a "committee type" of person.

"It's just that the way to achieve things is often through a group and the group automatically calls itself a committee," he says. "So I keep getting on committees."

The Barrows came to Georgetown from Stirlingshire, Scotland, in 1972. Rev. Barrow says he and his wife had been talking about making the move for quite some time but had always put it off because of the advanced age of Mrs. Barrow's parents. After their death they decided if they didn't move, then they'd be too old to do so later.

Mr. Barrow's sister and Mrs. Barrow's brother have both lived in Canada with their families for about 20 years and thus Canada was a more natural choice when it came to making a move themselves. They had visited Canada before they came here permanently, and Mrs. Barrow has only returned to Scotland once since 1972.

NATURAL CHOICE

Mrs. Barrow is secretary to Dr. Browning in the Georgetown Medical Centre. The Barrows have three daughters, ages 14 to 19.

Rev. Barrow's father was a mental health officer with a tremendous concern for people. As well as serving in his job, he felt he had to serve the community too. Therefore he was on all sorts of committees.

"In that respect I guess I'm like him," he chuckles. "We must both be a trial to our wives. They don't see as much

of us as most married couples."

Rev. Barrow says he feels his position as a minister lets him help and counsel people in a different way to that which social workers must pursue.

"Social workers are professionals, while ministers are just gifted amateurs who can poke into all sorts of fields to help people," he says.

Rev. Barrow downplayed his involvement with the Highland Games Association.

"They have that organized down to a fine art now," he smiles. "I don't do much work with that at all. It's my wife who does the work there. She's the vice-president of the association. For me it's fun, not work."

Rev. Barrow says he plays a "very bad game of golf" and takes "not a bad picture" when he has time for it. He has also been known to make model boats.



Rev. Peter Barrow

Site approved for CAS home

The former Ontario Provincial Police station on the North Service Road in Oakville has

Dam costs approved

Regional council has approved the expenditure of \$247,500 for repairs to the paper mill dam above Glen Williams.

Dam modifications include the construction of a control structure and upstream channelization, which will be undertaken by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority in accordance with the wish of Halton Hills council.

The province of Ontario will contribute \$136,125 and the Conservation Authority \$111,375.

The balance of \$94,252 will be financed by the Region through debentures payable over a period not exceeding 10 years, with the debt charges being rated back to Halton Hills.

been approved for purchase by Halton regional council as a children's shelter to be operated by the Halton Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Regional solicitor Dennis Perlin advised council last week, however, that the society would have to make the purchase in its own name and have the renovating and equipping done, but the funds would be provided by council. Purchase cost is estimated at \$42,000 and renovations at \$103,000.

In return, the region would take back a mortgage charging the costs to the CAS annually.

Oakville Councillor Ron Planche said that while he fully supported having the shelter in a residential area, he was concerned about its proximity to the QEW.

Coun. McLean Anderson, also of Oakville, said that an Extendicare facility located directly across the highway had been very successful in providing a home for elderly persons.

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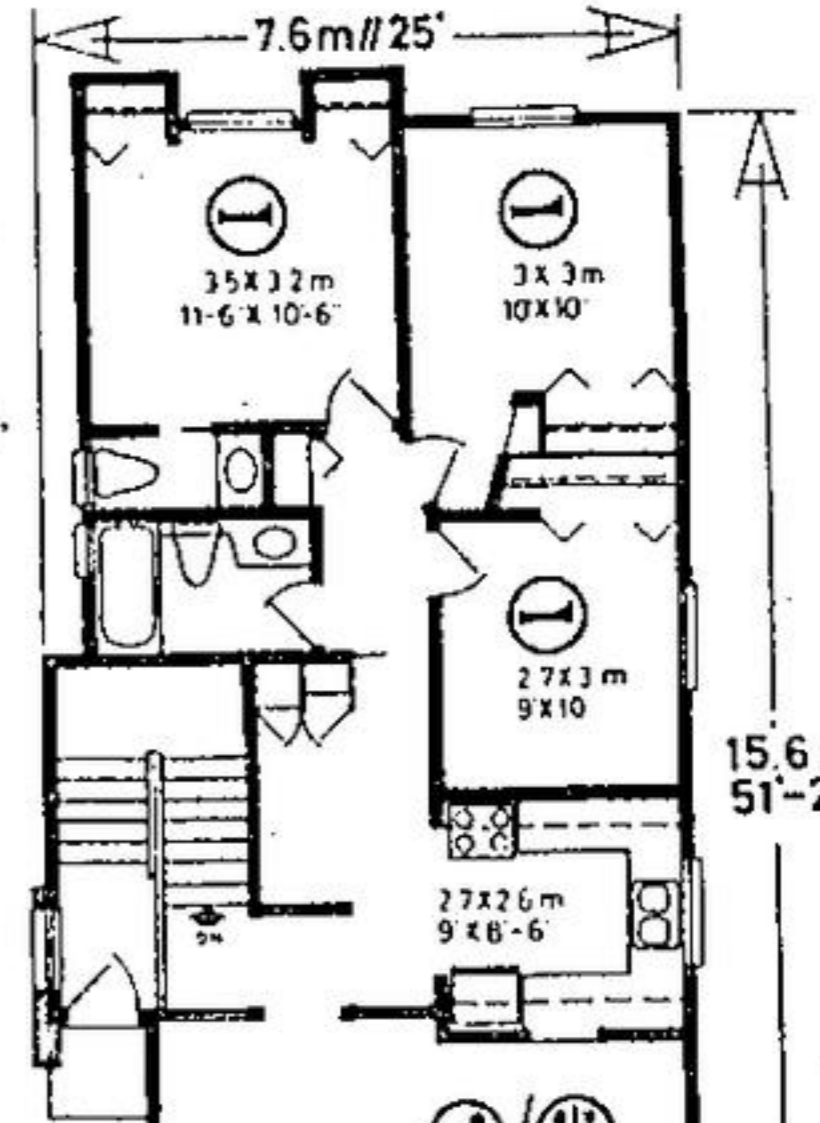
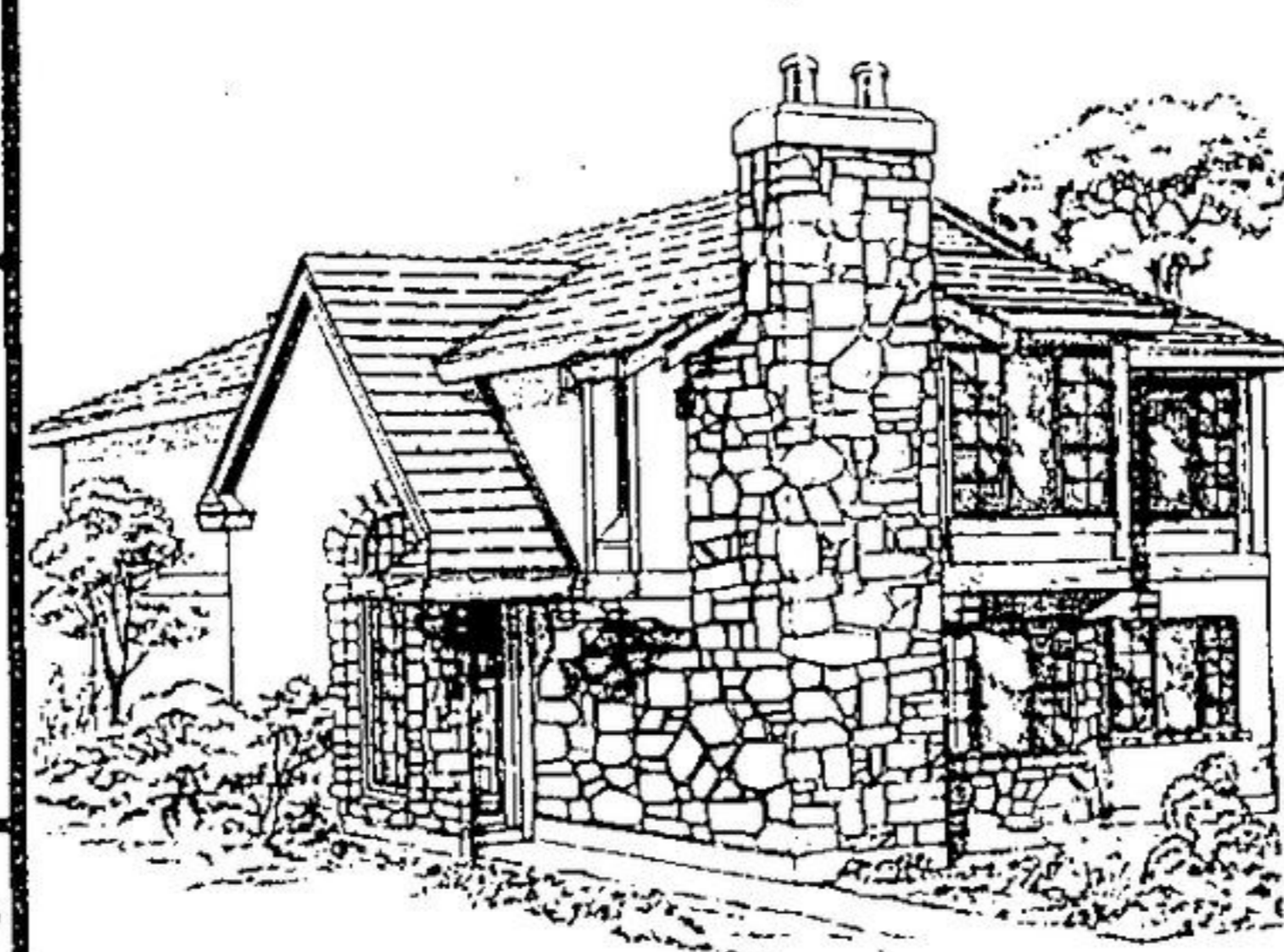
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